

Governance for Statistical Policies, Standards and Guidance

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Purpose

1. This document summarises the process to create, update and agree all Government Statistical Service (GSS) policies, standards, guidance and strategies (referred to collectively from this point forward as *policies* for short).

Background

2. Policies help to ensure that statistical teams carry out their functions in an orderly, professional, and consistent manner, and in accordance with their statutory obligations. Producers of official statistics are expected to operate in accordance with these.
3. The [Statistical Policy and Standards Committee](#) (SPSC) has a broad role which involves the oversight of all statistical policies. This includes development, promotion, and monitoring the implementation and application of statistical policies.
4. Any queries regarding the Policy and Guidance hub should be directed to the GSS inbox: gss@statistics.gov.uk

The Policy and Guidance Hub

5. All GSS policies should be available on the GSS [Policy and Guidance Hub](#). The Policy and Guidance Hub has the following objectives:
 - i. Helping people to find what they're looking for.
 - ii. Increasing awareness of existing policy.
 - iii. Preventing use of out of date policy.
 - iv. Avoiding unnecessary new policies / reinventing the wheel.
 - v. Identify gaps in policy areas.
6. SPSC is ultimately responsible for the content of the Policy and Guidance Hub but day to day maintenance is provided by the Central Policy Secretariat (CPS) of the UK Statistics Authority and the GSS Best Practice and Impact team at ONS.

Creating and updating GSS Policies

7. If you feel there is a gap in the available material and you are considering a new GSS policy, first check the Policy and Guidance Hub to ensure the information will not be duplicated and or contradictory to existing content. Please do likewise if you are updating existing policy.
8. If in doubt, contact CPS via gss@statistics.gov.uk. This is also your first port of call for contacting SPSC regarding any GSS policy. CPS will be able put you in touch with the appropriate GSS committee who can help with a new or revised GSS policy.
9. New or updated policies should be sent to gss@statistics.gov.uk to include in the Policy and Guidance Hub. Please ensure you include appropriate metadata (see below).

Identifying gaps or flagging errors in the Policy and Guidance Hub

10. If you find that there are clear topic gaps in the policies or guidance on the Hub, please contact gss@statistics.gov.uk and your request will be raised with the appropriate committee.
11. If any errors are identified on the Policy Hub please contact GSS inbox (email as above).

Sign-off

12. SPSC may consider any statistical policy at any time, and may sign off or retire any policy within its remit. Before signing off a policy, SPSC will need to be satisfied that its development has involved all relevant stakeholders as appropriate, and that the policy does not duplicate or conflict with existing policy. Each policy will require appropriate and possibly different stakeholders to be involved or informed.
13. SPSC may delegate authority for sign-off of some policies to its sub-groups. For instance, some harmonisation policies might be signed off at the National Statistics Harmonisation Steering Group (NSHSG).

Coordination

14. SPSC will:
 - i. determine which particular GSS body should take lead responsibility for each existing policy and potential new policies; and
 - ii. maintain and oversee the coverage and completeness of the Policy and Guidance Hub and identify any gaps.
15. GSS bodies given responsibility for each policies will:
 - i. review their Terms of Reference to ensure the policy is within their remit;
 - ii. formulate, maintain and review each allocated policy to ensure its continued coherence and relevance;
 - iii. submit policies with metadata (see below) to CPS every time they effect a change policies; and
 - iv. feed back to CPS if they believe that the existing portfolio of policies is duplicative, incomplete, redundant, etc.
16. GSS Heads of Profession will:
 - i. implement each policy within their own organisations and ensure that their own staff are kept aware of the full portfolio of GSS policies and comply with each as appropriate;
 - ii. engage with their counterparts in arm's length bodies sponsored by their organisation in order to ensure that they maintain an equivalent state of affairs; and
 - iii. feed back to CPS if they believe that the existing portfolio of policies is duplicative, incomplete, redundant, etc.

Metadata

17. The metadata on each document on the Policy hub will ensure that all policies are clear, up to date, and have a named contact. Please provide:
 - i. Title
 - ii. Purpose (summary of what the policy is about and target audience)
 - iii. Author (i.e. Committee, group or individual responsible)
 - iv. Contact details (i.e. a named contact with email (team inbox preferred)
 - v. Date of release
 - vi. Date to be reviewed
 - vii. Version control information (i.e. v1.0 or v2.0 etc.)
 - viii. Key words (identifiable /related words to aid the searcher)
 - ix. Links to other relevant policies
18. The metadata listed above should be located on at the beginning of the document.