**National Statistics Harmonisation Steering Group (NSH SG) Communication Plan 2017**

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| **SITUATION ANALYSIS**The National Statistics Harmonisation Group (NSHG) is responsible for, with the help of topic experts, the development and maintenance of common statistical frames, definitions and classification for statistics. The NSHG feeds into the National Statistics Harmonisation Steering Group (NSH SG), which in turn reports to the GSS Statistical Policy and Standards Committee (GSS SPSC), which is responsible for the agreement and promotion of statistical policies and standards covering all official statistics managed by the GSS. The uptake of harmonised principles across the GSS is not as high as it should be.  | **KEY MESSAGES*** Make input data and outputs more consistent and compatible with other data that cover the same concepts and questions
* Focus on common goals and outcomes with a view to carrying out analysis of data from different sources
* Make cross country comparisons
* Reduce respondent and user burden
* Make informed decisions in relation to data sources and statistics, within and across themes, in accordance with the ESS quality dimensions and aims of Coherence and Comparability
* Carry out cross survey/data analysis and integration, making statistics comparable across time and across different sources, thereby creating an environment in which multiple data sources can be integrated (including integration with administrative data)
* Avoid misinterpretation of data when users believe data are similar, but there are fundamental, but not apparent, differences
* Harmonisation is recommended within the Statistics and Registration Services Act, the Code of Practice for Official Statistics and the National Statistician’s Guidance
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|  **THE OBJECTS OF CARRYING OUT COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES IN 2016/17**The key objectives for carrying out communication activities in 2016/17 are to; 1. **Make harmonisation part of the GSS voice**
2. **Increase contact to and from users**

These communication objectives are aligned to the new strategic objectives. Alongside this, traditionally harmonisation has been implemented in a bottom up approach, which has gained some success. A top down approach is recommended from here on to gain further compliance. | **APPROACH*** Ensure GSS are aware of harmonisation and what it means for them
* Communicate harmonisation from a general GSS perspective as a GSS brand rather than a separate strand
* Promote harmonisation by default
* Improve increased comparability across (data sources) outputs:
	+ within themes
	+ across themes
	+ across countries
* Encourage Senior managers to champion and raise the profile of harmonisation
* Reach users that are not currently liaising with harmonisation for whatever reason
* Increase communication to and with the harmonisation team
* Help understanding of the differences between harmonisation and standardisation
* Improve comparability across data sources
* Focus more on the objectives and outcomes of harmonisation from the user perspective
* Contact organisers of upcoming GSS Conferences to influence theme(s)
* Increase communication via social media and blogging
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| **OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES**Positive messages to convey:* Harmonisation can be a cost saving efficiency measure (SR15)
* Harmonisation is an enabler to improving the quality of outputs and contributes to the open data agenda, thus increasing user satisfaction. Outputs will all be more user focussed.
* If harmonisation is considered at the outset it can prevent delays and queries, increase understanding and avoid unnecessary confusion
* Compliance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and Code of Practice for Official Statistics and the National Statistician’s Guidance

Factors likely to produce resistance to change:* Loss of time series
* Expense to change systems and carry out methodological development work
* Perception there is a lot of work to do and that harmonisation is a hindrance rather than an enabler
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| **Tactic** | **Purpose** | **Audience** | **Timing** | **Accountable** | **Feedback** |
| **Phase 1 (Q1 – Jan/Feb/Mar):** |  |
| Organise Harmonisation to be included within various ONS/GSS/ Divisional inductions for new staff(Objective 1 & 2) | To raise awareness of harmonisation | ONS | January - March | The Harmonisation Team**Ongoing – liaising with GSS Capabilities Team (Charles Lound)** | Steve Cooley and Charles – thinking about common themes |
| Conduct review of all current Harmonised Principles(Objective 1 & 2) | To ensure all principles are up to date for when Census begin to review questions for the 2017 test, 2019 rehearsal and 2021 Census | Various | January - March | The Harmonisation Team – Non census topic leads contacted and plan in place to review all Non census harmonised principles - **Ongoing** | Making good progress on;Age bands/Consumer durables/Wellbeing/ Migration and COB definitions/Education |
| Output Managers workshop (Joint communication with the Good Practice Team, Harmonisation, Quality and Geography) (Objective 1 & 2) | The Good Practice Team (GPT) communicates on a number of different areas and face similar challenges to harmonisation in terms of communicating GSS issues. The Harmonisation team meet with the GPT every six weeks and a joint communication would be advantageous  | GSS and Devolved Administrations | January - March | Martin Ralph to organiseONS Harmonisation Team/Good Practice Team/Quality Centre and Geography to contribute.(DCLG Statisticians Gathering and Cross Government Survey Sharing Group) | Planning meeting April 2017 |
| Provide response(s) to UK Statistics Authority Monitoring & Assessments (M&A) Team(Objective 1) | To encourage and monitor harmonisation across the GSS | GSS | January - March | The Harmonisation Team - when and as required by M & A Team  | Non this reporting period |
| Hold second GSS Business Harmonisation Task and Finish Group (BHTFG)(Objective 1 & 2) | To coordinated producing Business Harmonised Principles | GSS and Devolved Administrations | 3rd February  | The Harmonisation Team | Complete |
| Arrange meeting with CLOSER Cohort(Objective 1 & 2) | To discuss harmonisation comparability | Academia | January - March | Harmonisation Team and UK Data Service – **ongoing (emailed Claire Crawford and Chris Belfield, responsible for data Harmonisation research/work)** | Contacted – nil response |
| Present BHTFG development and workplan to BEIS(Objective 1 & 2) | To raise awareness of Harmonisation | BEIS | January - March | BHTFG members (Charlie and Ian) | On-goingCharlie liaising with BEIS to plan presentation |
| **Phase 2 (Q2 – Apr/May/June):** |  |
| Hold third GSS Business Harmonisation Task and Finish Group (BHTFG)(Objective 1 & 2) | To coordinated producing Business Harmonised Principles | GSS and Devolved Administrations | 7th April  | The Harmonisation Team | Complete |
| Presentations to Senior GSS manager meetings/workshops/seminars(Objective 1 & 2) | To gain senior GSS manager commitment and buy in | GSS and Devolved Administration | April – June | Steering Group members |  |
| Present to the Cross Government Sharing Group (Chaired by DfT)(Objective 1 & 2) | To raise awareness of Harmonisation | GSS | 18th May  | Steering Group/Harmonisation Team | Complete – Jil Pobjoy (Quality Centre) and Charlie Wroth-Smith (Harmonisation) presented to around 20 colleagues. Participants were engaged with the presentations and asked some questions. |
| Hold first ONS Ethnic Group Forum (Chaired by Harmonisation Team)(Objective 1 & 2) | To share information on ethnic group question development work, including online design, findings, user needs and information for research for ethnicity outputs. To also discuss and decide where it would be suitable to take an aligned approach. | ONS | 19th June | The Harmonisation Team | Complete - good engagement and way forward discussed - next meeting planned 15th September whereby each area will present their findings to latest round of testing and research |
| GSS Ethnicity Assurance Panel(Objective 1 & 2) | To discuss the impact of changing the census Ethnicity Question across the GSS | GSS | 21st June | Census and the Harmonisation Team | Complete |
| Present to the Presentation and Dissemination Committee (PDC)(Objective 1 & 2) | To raise awareness of Harmonisation | GSS | 27th June | The Harmonisation Team  | Becki presented the Harmonisation Dissemination Plan to the PDC for comment |
| **Phase 3 (Q3 – July/Aug/Sept):** |  |
| Hold Topic Lead Coordination Workshop(Objective 1) | To share good practice among Topic Leads, to identify issues and to ensure principles are up to date | GSS | 11th July  | The Harmonisation Team | After the NSHG |
| Present to DCLG Methodology seminar (held bi monthly)(Objective 1 & 2) | To raise awareness of Harmonisation | GSS | 11th July  | Steering Group/Harmonisation TeamInvited to present at the 27th April meeting – suggest Output Managers Workshop (Harmonisation Team/GPT/Quality) | Chair – Chris Denman (DCLG) – Statistician GatheringStephanie Freeth presented |
| Present to GSS Methodology Symposium Conference (GSSM22) (London) (Objective 1 & 2)(Theme – to be confirmed) | To raise awareness of harmonisation | Various | 12th July | The Harmonisation Team or Steering Group members |  Ian and Becki presented ‘Harmonisation, Past, Present and Future’ |
| Hold fourth GSS Business Harmonisation Task and Finish Group (BHTFG)(Objective 1 & 2) | To coordinated producing Business Harmonised Principles | GSS and Devolved Administrations | 15th August | The Harmonisation Team |  |
| Present to the International Conference of the Royal Statistical Society (Objective 1 & 2)Glasgow | To raise awareness of harmonisation | Various | 4th -7th September | The Harmonisation Team or Steering Group Member  | Abstract submitted |
| Hold Second ONS Ethnic Group Forum (Chaired by Harmonisation Team)(Objective 1 & 2) | To share information on ethnic group question development work, including online design, findings, user needs and information for research for ethnicity outputs. To also discuss and decide where it would be suitable to take an aligned approach. | ONS | 15th September | The Harmonisation Team |  |
| Present to the GSS Conference (Theme- to be confirmed)(Objective 1 & 2) | To raise awareness of harmonisation | Various |  September | The Harmonisation Team or Steering Group Member  | Alex Miller is the Chair of the GSS Conference organising committee |
| **Phase 4 (Q4 – Oct/Nov/Dec):** |  |
| Develop online Harmonisation training for use across the GSS GSR(Objective 1 & 2) | To raise awareness of harmonisation | GSS/GSR | (tbc) | The Harmonisation Team | Steve Cooley waiting for a response from Charles Lound (chased 27/04/2017) – Charles not responsible but GSS capabilities may be able to help |
| Organise UK Data Service demo of enhanced metadata Bank(Objective 1) | To raise awareness of Harmonisation | NSH Steering Group | (tbc) | UK Data Service  |  |
| Produce 2018 Communication Plan and Key Objectives(Objective 1 & 2) | To raise awareness of harmonisation | NSH SG and NSHG and Harmonisation Team | December  | The Harmonisation Team and the Steering Group (NSH SG) |  |
| Present business harmonisation to seminar at NISRA  | To raise awareness of Business Harmonisation | GSS/NISRA | Tbc | Charlie Wroth-Smith (Harmonisation Team) | NISRA are hosting the October BHTFG so will promote business harmonisation at that time |
| Present Business Harmonisation to the Statistical Community in the Welsh Government  | To raise awareness of Business Harmonisation | GSS/WG | Tbc | Ian Sidney (Harmonisation Team) | Ian Sidney (Harmonisation Team) to contact Craiger Solomons |
| Produce SurveyMonkey Questionnaire and conduct analysis(Objective 1 & 2) | To gauge levels of engagement across the GSS and Devolved Administrations with harmonisation, to raise awareness and target the gaps. | GSS and Devolved Administrations | July - August | The Harmonisation Team | Moved from previous quarter due to lack of resources  |