



GSS Quality Centre





The Government Statistical Service (GSS) Quality Centre supports the GSS in meeting its requirements to maintain, improve and report on quality under the Code of Practice for Statistics. The team provides mentoring, expert advice, consultancy, training and guidance on the quality of official statistics and respondent burden. The main areas of support are:

- Quality management, assurance and improvement
- Management and monitoring of quality reviews
- Management and support for quality reporting
- Measuring, minimising and reporting on respondent burden

The GSS Quality Centre supports the GSS community of some 7,000 statistical producers. Our work is not restricted to the GSS – we can and do support other government professionals. We work closely with the GSS Good Practice Team, Harmonisation Team and Methodology Advisory Service, as part of the GSS Best Practice and Impact Team.

We are happy to meet with statistics producers to discuss the services and support we offer and the best ways we can meet their needs.

The members of the team are experienced staff with in-depth knowledge of statistical quality issues in the production and dissemination of statistics across government.

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If you would like to discuss the ways in which the GSS Quality Centre can support your department, please get in touch.

Strategic direction

The GSS Quality Centre provides strategic direction across the GSS in all aspects of statistical quality and respondent burden. We are experts in our subject matter and provide leadership in quality management, assurance, improvement, reviews and reporting.

International

The GSS Quality Centre has well-established links with Eurostat and is an active member of several working groups and steering committees. The team has contributed to a number of strategic European documents, such as the European Statistical System (ESS) Handbook for Quality Reports and supporting documentation for the European Statistics Code of Practice. Going forward, we would like to build stronger international links and explore how international best practice can be applied across the GSS.



Strategy development

The team can advise on the development and implementation of quality strategies and frameworks. We are also developing a GSS-wide quality strategy and are keen to collaborate with GSS colleagues in order to deliver this work. Please contact us if you would like your department to be involved.

National Statistics Quality Reviews

The team leads and coordinates the GSS National Statistics Quality Review (NSQR) programme. These reviews are an important way of ensuring that statistics are fit for purpose and identifying opportunities for further investment and development.



Building capability

The GSS Quality Centre offers training, both formal and informal, in a range of formats and encompassing various aspects of statistical quality.

Training

Our established training courses (two examples are provided below) cover quality management, quality assurance and quality reporting. These training materials are flexible, can be tailored to suit the user and can be delivered at your department. Please contact us for further information.

Quality and Statistics

Training | 1 day

This is a full day course that covers an introduction to statistical quality, how statistics are produced, measuring quality, quality reporting, quality reviews and the contacts and resources available to support staff across the GSS. The course supports all GSS staff in adhering to both the UK and European Codes of Practice for Statistics.

Quality Assurance for Statistical Outputs

Training | ½ day

This course is designed for all staff who produce statistical outputs and covers the importance of quality and the quality assurance (QA) roles in output production. QA good practice is provided with structured examples from statistical producers. The cost of errors is highlighted, and attendees are also directed to guidance that is available to support them in improving quality in their work areas.

We also deliver a module for the University of Southampton's MSc in Official Statistics.



Consultancy

The GSS Quality Centre provides a consultancy service to help improve statistical quality across the GSS. Support ranges from an informal conversation or meeting to the delivery of more structured training courses or work packages. Please contact us to discuss how the team can support you to assess, monitor, review and improve quality within your department.

Advice and support

We provide advice and support on all aspects of statistical quality, including quality management and strategies, quality frameworks, and quality assurance approaches such as guidance and checklists.

Assessment support

In collaboration with the Office for Statistics Regulation, we provide advice and support to producers before and after assessment for Code of Practice compliance and National Statistics badging; especially around working through and meeting the requirements of an assessment.

Communication of quality information

We offer general guidance for communicating quality information to users as well as a peer review service for well-established quality reports that may require refinement.

Independent assurance

The Best Practice and Impact (BPI) Team is able to provide independent assurance about statistical capability. This is a consultancy support function, usually led by a divisional director, whereby BPI staff work with GSS departments to identify areas for improvement and recommend ways forward.

We work with the producer to develop terms of reference for the review and use a mixture of desk research (for example, exploration of published outputs, policies and processes) and structured interviews with relevant stakeholders and staff to understand how things are done and produce recommendations for potential improvements to processes and capability.

Consultancy

Reviews

Regular Quality Reviews

The GSS Quality Centre established the Regular Quality Review process within the Office for National Statistics. The review assesses the quality of a statistical output and offers tailored recommendations in order to make improvements. We are keen to explore with the GSS if a similar process could be adopted within other departments. The process itself is a flexible model and the team can support departments in adopting this approach.

Academic Peer Review of Methods

The team coordinates the GSS Methodology Advisory Committee. This offers government statisticians an academic peer review function for methods across the GSS. Please contact us for further information.



Sharing best practice

The GSS Quality Centre identifies best practice from across government, the private sector and internationally, and will share that best practice via the GSS website. We are also investigating best practice for communicating quality via different dissemination methods, such as social media.

Quality Champions

The team manages a network of GSS Quality Champions which exist to support Heads of Profession in raising the quality of official statistics within departments. Quality Champions promote quality management tools within departments, as well as coordinating best practice across the GSS. The GSS Quality Champions meet biannually. More information can be found on the GSS quality webpages: gss.civilservice.gov.uk/statistics/quality/



Tools, guidance and standards

The GSS Quality Centre has developed a number of tools and guidance documents to support statistics producers. These include the Guidelines for Measuring Statistical Output Quality, which provide a checklist of quality measures and indicators for measuring and reporting on the quality of a statistical output. We are conducting a review of our quality guidance to ensure it meets the needs of GSS statistics producers. Alongside this review, other guidance is in progress, such as documenting best practice for revisions analysis.

GSS website gss.civilservice.gov.uk/statistics/quality/

The GSS quality web pages will become a hub for quality-related tools, techniques and guidance, plus this information will be made available in the policy store.

Policy Store statisticsauthority.gov.uk/policy-store/

The store holds policies, standards and guidance for the GSS in one place and is managed collaboratively by the GSS Good Practice Team and the GSS Central Policy Secretariat. The Central Policy Secretariat help staff across the GSS to work together with senior leaders to achieve shared priorities.

One GSS voice

The GSS Quality Centre provides continued support and guidance to colleagues in the GSS and beyond. The channels below present some useful information about our services. For more information, please get in touch.

GSS website gss.civilservice.gov.uk

The GSS website provides news, guidance, career resources and event information for statisticians in government. The website is managed in collaboration with the GSS Central Policy Secretariat and the ONS Knowledge, Learning and Capability division.

GSS Slack channel gov-stats-service.slack.com

Network for GSS members to discuss professional and statistical topics of interest.

GSS Twitter feeds [@GSSGoodPractice](https://twitter.com/GSSGoodPractice) [@UKGSS](https://twitter.com/UKGSS)

The GSS and Good Practice Team Twitter feeds provide members of the GSS with updates on events and training, and is used to share news and blogs from across the statistical system.



Compliance

Reviews of Statistical Releases

The GSS Best Practice and Impact Team (GSS Good Practice Team, GSS Quality Centre and GSS Harmonisation Team) facilitates a programme of reviews of statistical releases from across government. The review programme provides an overview of the presentation and communication of the statistics, the level of adherence to harmonised principles and the standard of quality reporting across the GSS.

The team works with the Presentation, Quality, Harmonisation and Geography Champions networks to review a sample of statistical releases and accompanying materials, providing a RAG rating and feedback for improvement to producers.

The reviews provide reassurance of adherence to certain aspects of the Code of Practice for Statistics, build capability across the GSS and ensure the Presentation and Dissemination Committee and the Office for Statistics Regulation maintain oversight of release quality.

If you would like to put a statistical release forward for review, please get in touch.

Measuring, minimising and reporting on respondent burden

The team are responsible for collating, quality assuring and publishing the Online List of Government Statistical Surveys. This allows us to monitor compliance costs and the burden placed on respondents to GSS statistical surveys, and also advise on how to minimise this burden.

You can contact us for more information about respondent burden, or take a look at the resources on the GSS website.

