

**Minutes of the National Statistics Harmonisation Group (NSHG) Meeting**

**3rd July 2018**

**1100 to 1330 hrs**

**ONS, 1 Drummond Gate, London, SW1V 2QQ**

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| **Attendees:** |  | **Apologies:** |  |
| Steve Ellerd-Elliott – **Chair** | MoJ | Charlie Wroth-Smith | ONS |
| Alison Brookman | ONS via video | Dani Evans | ONS |
| Becki Aquilina | ONS via video | Emma Wright | ONS |
| Bhav Hirani | DfE | Helena Rosiecka | ONS |
| Catherine Davies | ONS via video | Ian Sidney | ONS |
| Claire Cameron | DWP via audio | Jill Morton | NRS |
| Daisie Hutchinson | ONS |  |  |
| Darren Stillwell | DfT |  |  |
| Dawn Camus | BEIS |  |  |
| Elzemiek Scott-Kortlever | ONS via video |  |  |
| Esther Sutherland | ONS via video |  |  |
| Hannah McConnell | ONS via video |  |  |
| Jamie Robertson | SG via audio |  |  |
| Jane Winter | NHS Digital via audio |  |  |
| Karen Hurrell | EHRC via video |  |  |
| Michelle Monkman | ONS via video |  |  |
| Paula Guy | ONS via video |  |  |
| Pete Betts | ONS |  |  |
| Sharon Hook | ONS via video |  |  |
| Silvia Manclossi | ONS via video |  |  |
| Steve Webster | NHS Digital |  |  |
| Tony Whiffen | Welsh Gov via audio |  |  |
| Alison Brookman – secretariat | ONS via video |  |  |

1. **Welcome and Introduction – Steve Ellerd-Elliott**

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and thanked those who have left the NSHG for their contribution.

**2.0 Minutes and Actions from the previous meeting, NSHG (18:1) 04 – Steve Ellerd-Elliott**

There were no comments from the previous minutes. An on-going action from the last meeting is the induction of several new topic leads.

**Action 1:**  **Harmonisation Team to organise Harmonisation Inductions for all new Topic Leads**

**3.0 Update on Harmonisation Work**

1. **Verbal Update, NSH SG / GSS SPSC Meeting Report – Steve Ellerd-Elliott**

The main points were:

* GSS SPSC
  + Julie Stanborough presented ‘Driving forward Harmonisation’ to the committee; Julie actioned to meet with David Fry who is the Chair of GSS SPSC to discuss the relationship between the Best Practice and Impact (BPI) Team and SPSC regarding harmonisation, with particular reference to administrative data and the role of SPSC and BPI
  + The Committee have taken some SPSC work programme items and governance proposals to the National Statisticians Executive Committee (NSEC) to discuss work and support going forward.
  + ‘The Analysis Function’ was launched at the beginning of June 2017

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-analysis-function-strategy>

* + - a single strategy across statistical professions; ‘Better analysis, better delivery’
    - aim is to provide a single voice within government for analysis, part of an active ‘analysis function’ this calls for harmonisation across all professions

**Action 2: Becki to circulate the update from Julie and any relevant meeting minutes to NSHG members**

**Action 3: Steve Ellerd-Elliott to provide information relating to the ‘Analysis Function’ (complete – see ink above)**

1. **NSHG Update**

**Social Harmonisation**

* + new harmonisation Topic Leads;
    - Ian Sidney for Loneliness
    - Sharon Hook for Consumer Durables
    - Georgina Martin for Social Capital
    - Paula Guy for Demography
    - Melissa Randal for Gender ID and Sexual Orientation
    - Chauncey Glass for Housing
    - Jane Winter for Health, Disability and Carers
    - Bhav Hirani for Educational Attainment
    - Tom Treadwell for Homelessness

All new Topic Leads will be contacted by a member of the Harmonisation Team to provide a Harmonisation Induction in the next couple of weeks

* + the Harmonisation Team are continuing to develop a new harmonised definition for Homelessness; and revising definitions for Internet access
  + continued liaison with several programmes and initiatives across the GSS (2021 Census, ONS Data Collection Transformation Programme, GDS, GSS Data Discovery Project; Race Disparity Audit (RDA); Admin Data Census Programme)
  + we previously reported that due to the growing importance of harmonisation and increased recognition, Julie Stanborough is increasing resource to the Harmonisation Team. Interviews have taken place and people will be in place imminently
  + new potential topic - Sharing Economy (Pauline Beck); once we have enough user need information, the NSHG and the SG will be notified accordingly
* working closely with Eurostat to develop a framework on the Sharing economy (SE). We will align to their definition/thresholds to allow for comparisons across European countries
* starting in July, we will work with the Big Data team to collect more information on SE businesses with Web-scrapped data
* questions on the Opinions and Lifestyle survey are being run again this year
* will also reproduce a similar analysis on business data again this year

**Business Harmonisation**

* meetings have been replaced with workshops targeting the right level of involvement
* work on business harmonisation has paused due to a lack of resource in the Harmonisation Team – this will be resumed as soon as successful candidates of the recent recruitment exercise are in place.

**Other Matters**

* all Harmonised Principe’s have been added to the Beta GSS website. The format has been changed and we would appreciate your views on these. Please visit;

<https://gss.civilservice.gov.uk/guidances/harmonisation/>

* the Harmonisation Team presented at the Quality Conference (Poland)
* the Harmonisation Team have secured a sandwich student for 3 months – looking at Migration and assisting the Topic Lead, Hannah McConnell

**Action 4: Call for comments regarding BETA GSS website**

1. **NSHG (18:2) 03, Communications Plan – Becki Aquilina**

Becki presented the Communication Plan. Members were reminded the two main objectives of the Communication Plan are to;

1. Make Harmonisation part of the GSS voice
2. Increase contact to and from users

* members were asked to email Becki with communication tactics for 2018, the following suggestions were raised:
  + - GSS Conference (last quarter of 2018)
    - GES/GSR Conference (21st September)
    - Civil Service Live (potential for next year)
    - Daisie to shadow Scottish Government for one - two weeks to share work experiences
    - consider EU interest and other opportunities
    - consider raising awareness across analytical professions (contact Gareth Clancy who is leading on the analysis function to look at communication opportunities)

**Action 5: Members to consider suggestions of conferences/workshops where harmonisation could be promoted.**

**Action 6: Becki to contact Gareth Clancy regarding the ‘Analysis Function’ and harmonisation promotion.**

**4.0 Census Topic Update – Esther Sutherland on behalf of Helena Rosiecka**

* outstanding topic level decisions include; Sexual orientation, Gender Identity and exact tick-box specification for the Ethnic Group question
* the Office for National Statistics has yet to finalise its recommendations for the 2021 Census. Once finalised, the Government will bring forward a White paper in late 2018 setting out the proposals for the 2021 Census
* work is progressing on development of the questions to be used in the 2021 Census; this work is focused on optimising the questions for online first Census
* Census and Harmonisation worked closely on a joint meeting to progress plans for redeveloping the unpaid care and long-term limiting illness questions
* work on gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status and ethnic group is reported in the topic lead reports on gender identity, demography and EILR respectively
* Census is currently undertaking a wide range of testing in a suite of questions, with 4 tests currently in the field and more due in the summer;
* Cognitive testing of question changes to optimise for online; sexual orientation, marital status, armed forces, labour market questions, unpaid care, long-term limiting illness, who lives here. Central heating (and other housing questions), relationship matrix and ethnic group
* Small and large quantitative testing of impacts of question changes on the Census; religion, sexual orientation and gender identity
* the user need for information on the breakdown of highest level of qualification is being reviewed as ongoing work aiming to shorten OR simplify the question has to date produced viable options that shorten OR simplify

**5.0 Health Update – Alison Brookman**

1. **Cross Governmental Health Meeting for Health Disability and Unpaid Care**

Summary document of the meeting is available [here](file:///C:/Users/aquilre/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/Temporary%20Internet%20Files/Health%20etc/May%20Meeting%20'18/14.5.18%20Cross%20Governmental%20Health%20Meeting%20-%20Summary%20Document.docx)

1. **Smoking and Alcohol Stakeholder engagement event**

The event involved other Government departments, charities and academics working within the field and contained several group exercises aimed at focusing the discussion to specific aspects of the terminology used, methodologies applied and the form of data dissemination.

Summary documents will be available in due course and will form part of a ‘inform the need’ NSHG document, this will be circulated for comments shortly.

**Comments:**

* Suggestion that Health needs to be differentiated from disability and unpaid care, supported by Steve Webster and Karen Hurrell.
* Support for the introduction of ‘lifestyle’ principle.

**Action 7: Any members who wish to be involved in further stakeholder engagement, please ensure that the Harmonisation Team are aware of your interest.**

**6.0 Homelessness Update – Daisie Hutchinson**

* Sept 2017: MHCLG approached the Harmonisation Team to enquire if there were harmonised principles for homelessness
* the Harmonisation Team began considering user engagement to see who was collecting information on homelessness and what the information is used for
* we found that there was a strong user need to look at creating a harmonised definition for homelessness due to inconsistencies across government
* took homelessness topic to NSHG and NSH SG who agreed we could take this work forward
* begun to create a list of stakeholders to invite to topic group
* put topic on hold when Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) report was released as we didn’t want to duplicate work
* when we found the work wasn’t being duplicated the Harmonisation Team continued to make progress on the topic
* two topic group meetings have been held and agreement to create a feasibility report by November – this has been published by Iain Bell and included in the housing workplan

**Comments:**

* Steve Ellerd-Elliott – 21st June Ed Humpherson wrote about homelessness and the need to present these statistics in a consistent way; <https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/correspondence/response-on-statutory-homelessness-statistics/>

**Action 8: Ed Humpherson’s report to be circulated to members (see link above)**

**7.0 Loneliness Update – Silvia Manclossi on behalf of Ian Sidney**

Silvia gave a brief overview of the work to produce harmonised measures to capture loneliness. The following comments were received:

* concerns raised over the timeframe imposed on this project (Autumn 2018).
  + - these concerns have been expressed by several stakeholders; resources have been reallocated to ensure that these tight deadlines can be met.
  + interest expressed in the ethical implications and the approval sought to interview children and young people (looking at three age groups; 10-15 over 16 and 16 – 24). If three sets of questions are required for each age group there may be strain on already tight surveys – one set of questions which cover all age groups would be preferred
    - some concerns raised over the sensitivity of the topic and any social responsibility if loneliness is identified within the population.
    - permission has been received by the ethics board to proceed.

**8.0 NSHG (18:2) 08, NSHG Topic Lead Updates – Topic Group Leads**

The Chair thanked the topic leads for their reports and asked if topic leads would like to bring something to the attention of members;

**Benefits and Tax Credits – Claire Cameron**

About to launch into Qcom process; will be contacting stakeholders to ask if they would like to change any of the questions or remove existing questions that are out of date or irrelevant. Please see report for further information.

**Consumer Durables**

New topic lead has just been inducted, Sharon Hook will be taking over the topic as of July 2018.

**Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour – Fiona Aitchison**

A new cross government topic group has been held recently and the focus going forward will be administrative data and harmonisation across the devolved administrations. Please see report for further information.

**Demographic Information – Paula Guy**

Marital status supreme court ruling in favour of opposite sex couples right to be Civil Partnered; unsure if there will be a change to the law; keeping a watching brief on timescales which may change from what was noted within the report. Also, currently testing and researching the marital status for the 2021 Census. Claire Cameron wished to be more involved with the stakeholder engagement regarding the household definition and has requested an update on the recent meeting (June). Please see report for further information.

**Economic Activity – Debbie Curtis**

Please see report.

**Education – Julian Austin/Tony Clarke**

Bhav Hirani will be the new topic lead for Education. The Department for Education have been working closely with the Census 2021 to develop a new question. Please see report for further information.

**EILR – Amanda Sharfman**

Please see report.

**Gender Identity – Michelle Monkman**

A decision has not been made on the gender identity question for the 2021 Census. Canada intend to ask a gender Identity question on their 2021 and the team have been liaising with them to learn more about what they are doing. Canada have also implemented a question on their social surveys. Jamie Robertson (Scotland) has informed the group that the Scottish Housing Survey is trialling a non-binary gender question, Michelle and Jamie to share their findings from the Canada census and the Scottish housing Survey trial. A restructure of the team in the Population Statistics Division will be working on both gender identity and sexual Orientation headed up by Melissa Randall. For further information please see the report.

**Action 9: Michelle and Jamie to share their findings from the Canada Census and the Scottish Housing Survey.**

**Health, Disability and Carers – Steve Webster**

Please see report. Jane Winter to be taking over this topic.

**Homelessness – Tom Treadwell**

Please see report.

**Housing and Tenure – Chauncey Glass**

Please see report.

**Income – Mathew Minifie**

Please see report.

**Internet Access – Grant Blank**

A number of new proposals have been put to the internet access group and feedback has been actioned. The group are close to agreeing a set of questions ready for testing. Please see report for further information.

**Loneliness – Silvia Manclossi on behalf of Ian Sidney**

The report identifies the stakeholders that are involved in the technical working group for loneliness. Please see report.

**Migration, Country of Birth and Citizenship – Hannah McConnell**

Please see report.

**Personal Well-being – Silvia Manclossi**

The team have been conducting user engagement with stakeholders interested in Personal well-being and collected user feedback from an online survey to see how the data is used. The main feedback received is that the team focus on headline results and don’t provide enough in-depth information for example for Policy teams to act on the information provided. Going forward, planning to add further resources to provide more information and review the frequency of publication. The next publication is next week. For further information please see the report.

**Social Capital – Silvia Manclossi on behalf of Georgina Martin**

Please see report.

**9.0 Any Other Business**

* None raised.

**10.0 Next Meetings**

Date of the next meetings is:

* 7th November 2018, 1100 to 1330 hrs at ONS Drummond Gate

**ANNEX A**

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| **ACTIONS FROM THE NSHG MEETING – 3rd July 2018** | | | | |
| **No** | **Para** | **Action** | **Responsible** | **Status** |
| 1 | 2.0 | Harmonisation Team to organise Harmonisation Inductions for all new Topic Leads | Harmonisation team | On-going |
| 2 | 3.0 | Becki to circulate the update from Julie and any relevant meeting minutes to NSHG members | Becki Aquilina |  |
| 3 | 3.0 | Steve Ellerd-Elliott to provide information relating to the ‘Analysis Function’ | Steve Ellerd-Elliott | Complete |
| 4 | 3.0 | Call for comments regarding BETA GSS website | All NSHG members |  |
| 5 | 3.0 | Members to consider suggestions of conferences/workshops where harmonisation could be promoted | All NSHG members |  |
| 6 | 3.0 | Becki to contact Gareth Clancy regarding the ‘Analysis Function’ and harmonisation promotion | Becki Aquilina |  |
| 7 | 5.0 | Any members who wish to be involved in further stakeholder engagement, please ensure that the Harmonisation Team are aware of your interest | All NSHG members |  |
| 8 | 6.0 | Ed Humpherson’s report to be circulated to members | Harmonisation team | Complete |
| 9 | 8.0 | Michelle and Jamie to share their findings from the Canada Census and the Scottish Housing Survey | Michelle Monkman and Jamie Robertson |  |