

# Assessment of compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics

## Statistics on Transport in Scotland

*(produced by the Scottish Government)*

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### **About the UK Statistics Authority**

The UK Statistics Authority is an independent body operating at arm's length from government as a non-ministerial department, directly accountable to Parliament. It was established on 1 April 2008 by the *Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007*.

The Authority's overall objective is to promote and safeguard the production and publication of official statistics that serve the public good. It is also required to promote and safeguard the quality and comprehensiveness of official statistics, and good practice in relation to official statistics.

The Statistics Authority has two main functions:

1. oversight of the Office for National Statistics (ONS) – the executive office of the Authority;
2. independent scrutiny (monitoring and assessment) of all official statistics produced in the UK.

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# **Assessment of compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics**

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## ASSESSMENT AND DESIGNATION

The *Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007* gives the UK Statistics Authority a statutory power to assess sets of statistics against the *Code of Practice for Official Statistics*.

Assessment will determine whether it is appropriate for the statistics to be designated as National Statistics.

Designation as National Statistics means that the statistics comply with the *Code of Practice*. The *Code* is wide-ranging. Designation can be interpreted to mean that the statistics: meet identified user needs; are produced, managed and disseminated to high standards; and are explained well.

Designation as National Statistics should not be interpreted to mean that the statistics are always correct. For example, whilst the *Code* requires statistics to be produced to a level of accuracy that meets users' needs, it also recognises that errors can occur – in which case it requires them to be corrected and publicised.

Assessment Reports will not normally comment further on a set of statistics, for example on their validity as social or economic measures. However, Reports may point to such questions if the Authority believes that further research would be desirable.

Assessment Reports typically provide an overview of any noteworthy features of the methods used to produce the statistics, and will highlight substantial concerns about quality. Assessment Reports also describe aspects of the ways in which the producer addresses the 'sound methods and assured quality' principle of the *Code*, but do not themselves constitute a review of the methods used to produce the statistics. However the *Code* requires producers to "seek to achieve continuous improvement in statistical processes by, for example, undertaking regular reviews".

The Authority may grant designation on condition that the producer body takes steps, within a stated timeframe, to fully meet the *Code's* requirements. This is to avoid public confusion and does not reduce the obligation to comply with the *Code*.

The Authority grants designation on the basis of three main sources of information:

- i. factual evidence and assurances by senior statisticians in the producer body;
- ii. the views of users who we contact, or who contact us, and;
- iii. our own review activity.

Should further information come to light subsequently which changes the Authority's analysis, it may withdraw the Assessment Report and revise it as necessary.

It is a statutory requirement on the producer body to ensure that it continues to produce the set of statistics designated as National Statistics in compliance with the *Code of Practice*.

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# 1 Summary of findings

## 1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 This is one of a series of reports<sup>1</sup> prepared under the provisions of the *Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007*<sup>2</sup>. The Act requires all statistics currently designated as National Statistics to be assessed against the Code of Practice for Official Statistics<sup>3</sup>. The report covers the following National Statistics<sup>4</sup> produced by the Scottish Government:

- *Scottish Transport Statistics (STS)*;
- *Main Transport Trends (MTT)*;
- *Bus and Coach Statistics (BCS)*;
- *National Travel Survey – Scottish Results (NTS)*;
- *Reported Road Casualties Scotland (RRCS)*; and
- *Key Reported Road Casualty Statistics (KRRCS)*.

1.1.2 This report was prepared by the Authority's Assessment team, and approved by the Board of the Statistics Authority on the advice of the Head of Assessment.

1.1.3 *STS* and *MTT* are compendium publications. Assessments of compendium publications against the Code of Practice relate to the processes involved in preparing the publication, rather than in producing the statistics that are included. Those sets of statistics will normally be subject to separate assessment. Designation of a compendium publication as National Statistics therefore means that the producer body has, for example: identified and met user needs in terms of the content of the publication; considered the appropriateness of each series for inclusion; and written appropriate commentary.

## 1.2 Decision concerning designation as National Statistics

1.2.1 The Statistics Authority judges that the statistics covered by this report are readily accessible, produced according to sound methods and managed impartially and objectively in the public interest, subject to any points for action in this report. The Statistics Authority confirms that the statistics detailed in paragraph 1.1.1 above are designated as National Statistics, subject to the Scottish Government implementing the enhancements listed in section 1.5 and reporting them to the Authority by January 2011.

## 1.3 Summary of strengths and weaknesses

1.3.1 There is regular, effective user engagement via well-established user groups whose views are well documented. The Scottish Government has improved the format, content and timing of these transport publications following consultation

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment-reports/index.html>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.opsi.gov.uk/Acts/acts2007/pdf/ukpga\\_20070018\\_en.pdf](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/Acts/acts2007/pdf/ukpga_20070018_en.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html>

<sup>4</sup> These outputs are available at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Transport-Travel/Publications>

with users. Scottish Government transport statisticians also engage well with data suppliers – for example, they hold meetings with, and visit, police forces to discuss issues with road accident data.

- 1.3.2 The methods and quality assurance processes which the Scottish Government uses to compile these transport publications are clearly explained and it publishes metadata for these transport statistics. Two of the outputs being assessed are compendia, incorporating both National Statistics and non-National Statistics. Statistics on road casualties are widely recognised as being an incomplete count of both accidents and casualties. Following the Authority's assessment of GB road casualty statistics<sup>5</sup> (derived from the STATS19 form which police complete following an accident), the Scottish Government has discussed this issue with users and taken some steps to explain the figures more clearly but has not yet undertaken or published any estimation of the under-reporting.
- 1.3.3 The Scottish Government does not publish clear information about the uses of the statistics or the types of decision they inform. The compendium publications are comprehensive documents and better signposting may improve the accessibility of the statistics for occasional users.

## 1.4 Detailed recommendations

- 1.4.1 The Assessment team identified some areas where it felt that the Scottish Government could strengthen its compliance with the Code. Those which the Assessment team considers essential to enable designation as National Statistics are listed in section 1.5. Other suggestions, which would improve the statistics and the service provided to users but which are not formally required for their designation, are listed at annex 1.

## 1.5 Requirements for designation as National Statistics

<b>Requirement 1</b>	Publish information about users' needs and the use made of the statistics (para 3.4).
<b>Requirement 2</b>	For <i>Reported Road Casualties Scotland</i> and <i>Key Reported Road Casualty Statistics</i> , develop a best approximation of the numbers of casualties based on research into the under-counting associated with the STATS19 form (para 3.12).
<b>Requirement 3</b>	Explain the distinction between National Statistics and the other types of statistics that are in the compendium publications, and confirm that the non-National Statistics are of adequate quality (para 3.14).

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<sup>5</sup> Assessment Report 4: <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment-reports/index.html>

- Requirement 4** Enhance the clarity and interpretability of the *Scottish Transport Statistics* publication by providing clear explanations of tables, diagrams and graphs (para 3.25).
- Requirement 5** Ensure that the *Main Transport Trends* publication includes appropriate signposting and commentary relating to the relevant national indicator (para 3.26).



## 2 Subject of the assessment

2.1 The six assessed transport statistics publications cover various aspects of travel and transport in Scotland:

- *Scottish Transport Statistics (STS)* is an annual compendium publication which provides detailed statistics on many transport topics including road traffic, public transport and freight by road, rail, air and water, and reported road accidents. It also includes chapters on international comparisons and transport funding.
- *Main Transport Trends (MTT)* summarises a range of transport statistics and is released earlier than the full STS publication to meet users' needs for timely headline statistics. It was introduced in 2006 and is published annually. It was previously published as a hard copy statistical bulletin but, following consultation with users, it is now a web-based publication. It includes information about freight, licensed vehicles, traffic estimates, how people travel to work and school, and travel by bus, rail, air and ferry.
- *Bus and Coach Statistics (BCS)* presents analyses of Scottish data from the Department for Transport's (DfT) *Public Services Vehicle Operators* survey and analyses of bus-related information collected by the Scottish Household Survey (SHS)<sup>6</sup> to describe bus use in Scotland. *BCS* is published every two years, and includes information on bus use, fares, quality of service, vehicle kilometres<sup>7</sup>, accessibility and operating costs.
- *National Travel Survey - Scottish Results (NTS)* presents Scottish analyses of DfT's National Travel Survey. The Scottish statistics were published every two years as a statistical bulletin until 2007 but are now published as web tables. The statistics include the number and purpose of trips, mode of transport used, total miles travelled, access to cars and bus services, and comparisons by gender, age and economic status.
- *Key Reported Road Casualty Statistics (KRRCS) and Reported Road Casualties Scotland (RRCS)* are annual publications which include statistics on road casualties and accidents reported to the police in Scotland. The former is published in June and contains provisional data while the latter is published in November and includes more detailed analysis of the finalised data.

2.2 These Scottish Government's transport statistics are used for a variety of purposes, including:

- informing the development of national and local targets, such as the reduction in numbers of road casualties;
- monitoring and evaluating the impact of Scottish transport policies, such as concessionary travel schemes and road safety policies;
- informing transport operators' planning of transport services;

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/16002>

<sup>7</sup> DfT's Public Services Vehicle Operators Survey (STATS100A) uses data collected directly from bus operators in vehicle kilometres, rather than miles as in the National Travel Survey.

- academic research and transport modelling – for example, Transport Model for Scotland (TMfS), and Land Use and Transport Integration in Scotland (LATIS);
  - informing public debate about road safety initiatives;
  - identifying the characteristics of high-risk road casualty groups and informing education programmes; and
  - improving transport infrastructure.
- 2.3 Transport statistics in Scotland are based on data from a variety of sources, such as the SHS<sup>8</sup>, the GB Public Services Vehicle Operators Survey (STATS100A), reported road casualties data from Scottish police forces, and administrative data from a range of organisations, such as the Civil Aviation Authority and the Office of Rail Regulation.
- 2.4 As mentioned in paragraph 1.3.2, in 2009 the Statistics Authority assessed the *Road Casualty Statistics* produced by DfT. Although the Scottish road safety publications were not included in the assessment, the Scottish Government incorporated some changes to its 2009 edition of *RRCS* in response to the assessment findings. This included reinforcing the fact that the statistics related to 'reported' accidents and casualties only and further analysis of relevant data sources. Scottish road casualty statistics are collected in the same way as those published by DfT, from data recorded by police forces using the STATS19 form.
- 2.5 The Scottish Government told the Assessment team that it estimates costs to be around £28,000 a year to prepare and publish these Scottish transport outputs. This estimate is based on staff hours and publishing costs and does not include the costs of collecting and quality assuring road casualty data, or the costs of quality assuring and disseminating the SHS transport statistics.

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<sup>8</sup> The *Scottish Household Survey* outputs – including a Travel Diary – were assessed by the Statistics Authority in 2009, Assessment Report 26:  
<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment-reports/index.html>

### 3 Assessment findings

#### Principle 1: Meeting user needs

**The production, management and dissemination of official statistics should meet the requirements of informed decision-making by government, public services, business, researchers and the public.**

- 3.1 The Scottish Government engages with two main transport statistics user groups via the ScotStat<sup>9</sup> network – the Transport and Travel Statistics Advisory Committee (TTSAC) and the Liaison Group on Road Accident Statistics (LGRAS). TTSAC membership includes Scottish Government transport policy officials, transport operators from the private and public sectors, academics, transport consultants, Regional Transport Partnerships, local authorities and the voluntary sector. LGRAS membership includes representatives from Scottish Government policy teams, police forces, local authorities, Road Safety Scotland, Transport Scotland, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, and academia.
- 3.2 The Scottish Government’s transport statistics team publishes the remit and membership of both groups on its website, as well as the papers and minutes of the annual meetings of these groups. The minutes reflect, for example, LGRAS’ consideration of DfT’s review of road casualty statistics, and the Scottish Government’s consultation on revising the transport questions in the SHS questionnaire. The team also has regular contact with local authorities and regional transport providers.
- 3.3 The transport statistics team also consults users regularly – via meetings, emails and surveys – about changing the format, content and timing of transport publications to improve access to, and understanding of, the statistics. Examples of changes made to the transport publications following discussions with users include:
- improved signposting, simpler tables, more sub-Scotland analysis and concise commentary in the latest *BCS* publication;
  - changing the publication of *NTS* from a statistical bulletin to Excel tables on the web with an accompanying statistical news release outlining the main points;
  - improved formatting of *MTT* and *KRRCS*, with better signposting and clearer commentary; and
  - modifying the format and content of *STS*.
- 3.4 There is little published documentation on the use of the statistics, or the types of decision they inform. As part of the designation as National Statistics, the Scottish Government should publish information about users’ needs and the use made of the statistics<sup>10</sup> (Requirement 1).

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/scotstat>

<sup>10</sup> In relation to Principle 1 Practice 2 of the Code of Practice.

## **Principle 2: Impartiality and objectivity**

**Official statistics, and information about statistical processes, should be managed impartially and objectively.**

- 3.5 The statistics team publishes these statistical reports according to a published timetable and makes the statistics available free of charge on its website. It presents the statistics impartially and objectively.
- 3.6 It includes any changes to the methods used to produce these transport statistics in the publications, as well as explanations for – and background details about – these changes. The statisticians also email relevant users in advance of substantial changes, and these changes are discussed at annual user group meetings – for example, reweighting of SHS data, and the review of STATS19 data. They highlight revisions to, and correct errors in, the statistics on the Scottish Government’s website when they release them.

### **Principle 3: Integrity**

**At all stages in the production, management and dissemination of official statistics, the public interest should prevail over organisational, political or personal interests.**

- 3.7 No incidents of political pressure, abuses of trust or complaints relating to professional integrity, quality or standards were reported to or identified by the Assessment team.

## Principle 4: Sound methods and assured quality

**Statistical methods should be consistent with scientific principles and internationally recognised best practices, and be fully documented. Quality should be monitored and assured taking account of internationally agreed practices.**

- 3.8 The Scottish Government uses the same sources and methods to compile the *STS* and *MTT* publications and includes details of these sources and methods in the publications. Quality assurance is carried out both at source (for example by the contractors running the SHS<sup>11</sup>) and by the Scottish Government's transport statistics team which carries out further quality checks on the data. These publications include sample sizes where the information is based on survey responses.
- 3.9 The *BCS* publication includes details of the quality of the statistics and methods used. Where applicable, estimates include confidence intervals and explanations of how to interpret them. DfT is currently reviewing the quality of its bus survey information which the Scottish Government uses to compile its *BCS* publication. The Scottish Government has informed users about issues with DfT STATS19 data and will be involved in the quality assurance process for revised DfT estimates.
- 3.10 The Scottish Government statisticians publish a background note for the Scottish *NTS* publication which includes information about: sample design and type; methods of data collection, processing and checking; definitions; sampling variability and limitations; and weighting methodology. The information collected for *NTS* overlaps with aspects of the SHS. The team describes methodological differences<sup>12</sup> on the Scottish Government's website and plans to publish detailed comparisons between the two surveys to clarify how the data can be used.
- 3.11 The Scottish Government uses methods adopted by the Standing Committee on Road Accidents Statistics (SCRAS) to compile its *RRCS* and *KRRCS* publications. Scottish Government statisticians are represented on SCRAS. The Scottish Government publishes these methods and approaches in the publications and on its website<sup>13</sup> to explain that data refer to accidents and casualties reported to the police. The statisticians made various changes to its most recent *RRCS* report (published in November 2009) following the Authority's assessment of GB Road Casualty Statistics. These included:
- adding 'Reported' in the publication title and tables;
  - including explanations of reported accidents and casualties in the commentary; and
  - expanding the section which compared STATS19 data with other sources.

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<sup>11</sup> See paragraph 3.18 in Assessment Report 26 on the Scottish Household Survey for a description of quality assurance.

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/933/0098490.doc>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Transport-Travel/Methods>

- 3.12 LGRAS discussions highlighted concerns among users of Scottish road casualty statistics about the quality of the STATS19 data<sup>14</sup>. The Scottish Government told us that it works with police forces in Scotland to emphasise the importance of recording the data correctly. However, in line with the DfT assessment and as part of the designation as National Statistics, the Scottish Government should for *RRCS* and *KRRCS*, develop a best approximation of the numbers of casualties based on research into the under-counting associated with the STATS19 form<sup>15</sup> (Requirement 2).
- 3.13 The Scottish Government checks all its transport data against historical data and other data sources. Where source data look suspect, the statisticians seek confirmation of quality, and explanations of any differences, from the data provider. Scottish transport data are comparable with national (GB) standards – for example, data from Bus and Coach surveys are collected in a consistent and comparable manner across Great Britain, and reported road casualty and accident data are collected according to agreed GB-wide standards. The Scottish transport statistics publications present comparisons (including commentary) with other Scottish data, GB or UK equivalent data, and other countries.
- 3.14 *STS* and *MTT* are compendium publications, pulling together a range of data from a wide variety of sources, such as the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency and the Office of Rail Regulation's central ticketing system. The Scottish Government provides comprehensive notes and definitions in relation to these data and describes the limitations of the statistics. However the distinction between National Statistics and non-National Statistics (and non-official statistics) is not clear, and the Scottish Government should do more to inform users whether the statistics from other sources are broadly comparable in terms of quality with National Statistics. As part of the designation as National Statistics, the Scottish Government should explain the distinction between National Statistics and the other types of statistic that are in the compendium publications, and confirm that the non-National statistics are of adequate quality<sup>16</sup> (Requirement 3).

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<sup>14</sup> There is a degree of under-reporting of road accident casualties in the STATS19 system, as explained in Assessment report 4, paragraphs 3.3 to 3.5, see <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment-reports/index.html>

<sup>15</sup> In relation to Principle 4 Practice 2 of the Code of Practice.

<sup>16</sup> In relation to Principle 4 Practice 2 of the Code of Practice.

## **Principle 5: Confidentiality**

**Private information about individual persons (including bodies corporate) compiled in the production of official statistics is confidential, and should be used for statistical purposes only.**

- 3.15 The Scottish Government has assured the Assessment team that it takes all necessary steps to protect the confidentiality of the data collected and used in its transport statistics publications. The majority of the data are collected by other organisations and are anonymised and protected on secure servers.
- 3.16 The SHS section of the Scottish Government's website includes information for survey interviewees, including a leaflet about confidentiality<sup>17</sup>.
- 3.17 The Scottish Government informed the Assessment team that staff adhere to corporate guidelines when handling confidential data, and check that transport data are not disclosive before responding to ad hoc requests for information.

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<sup>17</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/16002/IntervieweesLeaflet>



## **Principle 6: Proportionate burden**

**The cost burden on data suppliers should not be excessive and should be assessed relative to the benefits arising from the use of the statistics.**

- 3.18 Much of the data used in Scottish transport statistics comes from the SHS, which is a voluntary survey. The SHS website includes information for survey respondents. Other transport data come from administrative sources and other organisations, such as the Office of Rail Regulation, DfT and the Civil Aviation Authority.
- 3.19 The transport statistics team told us that it evaluates existing data sources before carrying out new surveys – for example, when policy officials requested more bus-related data, the transport team met them to understand their requirements, and were then able to meet their needs by re-analysing existing data.

## Principle 7: Resources

**The resources made available for statistical activities should be sufficient to meet the requirements of this Code and should be used efficiently and effectively.**

- 3.20 A team of four full-time equivalent staff – one statistician, one assistant statistician and two administrators – manage these Scottish transport statistics, including the collection and quality assurance of SHS and reported road casualty data. The team has had a vacancy for an assistant statistician for the last 12 months. The statisticians informed the Assessment team that additional staff would enable them to improve the presentation and usability of the statistics – for example, to carry out more detailed analysis and discussion, improve the website, and provide more detailed comparisons with other data sources. This is especially important given the increased staff workload caused by additional quality assurance processes for the SHS Travel Diary (see paragraph 3.8).
- 3.21 The Scottish Government publishes its statistical planning arrangements<sup>18</sup> on its website. This includes guidance for producer teams on statistical planning and the Chief Statistician's annual Business Plan. The Business Plan includes details of staffing levels for statisticians.
- 3.22 The Scottish Government has well-established procedures for recruiting staff. It also has a dedicated training and development intranet for statistical staff that includes a competence framework and provides information about learning and development opportunities.

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<sup>18</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/About/Planning>

## Principle 8: Frankness and accessibility

**Official statistics, accompanied by full and frank commentary, should be readily accessible to all users.**

- 3.23 The Scottish Government's transport statistics team told the Assessment team that they follow corporate publication guidelines, and present all web publications in accessible formats. All data tables are published in Excel for re-use and further analysis, and the statisticians provide datasets for further analysis on request (subject to authorisation and confidentiality).
- 3.24 Several users mentioned that the statistical publications are comprehensive reports and contain good commentary. The statisticians regularly discuss the format and content of the reports with the two user groups described in paragraph 3.1. The publications (especially the *STS* and *MTT* compendia) are large and comprehensive documents, and there is often overlap between publications. Less frequent users expressed a need for better signposting. The Scottish Government has recently published an overview<sup>19</sup> of which data can be found in which publication and mentioned plans to improve the explanation of the different data sources. The Assessment team suggests that the Scottish Government continue to review the accessibility of the statistics to better enable users to identify and access information relevant to their needs.
- 3.25 There is scope to improve the presentation of some tables, diagrams and graphs in the *STS* publication. For example, some tables lacked clear explanations (such as of breaks in time series), and the presentation of some diagrams and graphs could be improved by including the accompanying text next to the diagrams. As part of the designation as National Statistics, the Scottish Government should enhance the clarity and interpretability of the *STS* publication by providing clear explanations of tables, diagrams and graphs<sup>20</sup> (Requirement 4).
- 3.26 *MTT* includes the first release of some SHS transport statistics, including data which monitor progress against the Scottish Government's target to increase the proportion of journeys to work made by public transport, walking or cycling<sup>21</sup>. As part of the designation as National Statistics, the Scottish Government should ensure that the *MTT* publication includes appropriate signposting and commentary to the relevant national indicator<sup>22</sup> (Requirement 5).
- 3.27 The Scottish Government publicises its statistical outputs in various ways, including: its website and other websites; email updates to Scotstat users and policy colleagues; meetings with stakeholders; briefings, seminars and roadshows; and newsletters and magazine articles. It is not always entirely clear from the title of the publications what the geographical coverage of the statistics is. The Assessment team suggests that the Scottish Government make this clear in its transport statistics publications.

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<sup>19</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Transport-Travel/transportsources>

<sup>20</sup> In relation to Principle 8 Practice 2 of the Code of Practice.

<sup>21</sup> National Performance Framework: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/11/13092240/9>

<sup>22</sup> In relation to Principle 8 Practice 2 of the Code of Practice.

3.28 The Scottish Government archives road casualty data at GB level, and sends SHS data to the Economic and Social Data Service website. It also sends hard copies of the publications to The National Archive.

## **Protocol 1: User engagement**

**Effective user engagement is fundamental both to trust in statistics and securing maximum public value. This Protocol draws together the relevant practices set out elsewhere in the Code and expands on the requirements in relation to consultation.**

3.29 The requirements for this Protocol are covered elsewhere in this report.

## Protocol 2: Release practices

**Statistical reports should be released into the public domain in an orderly manner that promotes public confidence and gives equal access to all, subject to relevant legislation.**

- 3.30 The Scottish Government publishes transport statistics on its website and on the National Statistics Publication Hub. In line with the Pre-release Access to Official Statistics (Scotland) Order 2008<sup>23</sup>, the Scottish Government keeps a record of those who have pre-release access to its transport statistics and makes these details available on request.
- 3.31 The Scottish Government currently publishes *NTS* and local authority level transport data as web tables with an accompanying statistical news release which includes some commentary. This allows the statisticians to publish the statistics as soon as they are ready. Users informed the Assessment team that they are satisfied with this approach.

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<sup>23</sup> [http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/ssi2008/pdf/ssi\\_20080399\\_en.pdf](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/ssi2008/pdf/ssi_20080399_en.pdf)

### **Protocol 3: The use of administrative sources for statistical purposes**

**Administrative sources should be fully exploited for statistical purposes, subject to adherence to appropriate safeguards.**

- 3.32 As new sources are identified or become available, the transport statistics team considers the relevance and quality of the data and includes it in these transport publications where appropriate. Similarly, sources are no longer used if they cease to be appropriate – for example, data on toll bridges in Scotland are no longer collected following the abolition of bridge tolls in Scotland in 2008.
- 3.33 The statisticians told us that they seek opportunities to improve the efficiency of their administrative systems. For example, they replaced two overlapping but inconsistent surveys of local authorities (on road length) with a single version which met the needs of the two user groups. This also reduced the burden on local authority suppliers, increased efficiency and improved the quality of data.
- 3.34 The Scottish Government publishes a Statement of Administrative Sources<sup>24</sup> including the sources used in compiling Scottish transport statistics.

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<sup>24</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/933/0097141.doc>

## **Annex 1: Suggestions for improvement**

A1.1 This annex includes some suggestions for improvement to the Scottish transport statistics published by the Scottish Government, in the interest of the public good. These are not formally required for designation, but the Assessment team considers that their implementation will improve public confidence in the production, management and dissemination of official statistics.

**Suggestion 1** Review the accessibility of the statistics to better enable users to identify and access information relevant to their needs (para 3.24).

**Suggestion 2** Make clear in the titles of all the transport statistics publications what the geographical coverage of the statistics is (para 3.27).



## **Annex 2: Summary of assessment process and users' views**

A2.1 This assessment was conducted from April to July 2010.

A2.2 The Assessment team – Phil Grigor and Cathy Kruger – agreed the scope of and timetable for this assessment with representatives of the Scottish Government in April 2010. The Written Evidence for Assessment was provided on 2 June. The Assessment team subsequently met the Scottish Government during June to review compliance with the Code of Practice, taking account of the written evidence provided and other relevant sources of evidence.

### **Summary of users contacted, and issues raised**

A2.3 Part of the assessment process involves our consideration of the views of users. We approach some known and potential users of the set of statistics, and we invite comments via an open note on the Authority's website. This process is not a statistical survey, but it enables us to gain some insights about the extent to which the statistics meet users' needs and the extent to which users feel that the producers of those statistics engage with them. We are aware that responses from users may not be representative of wider views, and we take account of this in the way that we prepare assessment reports.

A2.4 The Assessment team received 47 responses from the user/supplier consultation. The respondents were grouped as follows:

Scottish Government	9
Other government departments	1
Interest groups/private sector	9
Local authorities	10
Media	1
Police	2
Data suppliers	15

A2.5 Users were satisfied with the level of engagement from the Scottish Government on these transport statistics. The statistics were most often used for monitoring performance (in particular at local or regional level), identifying trends, in research and for campaigning on transport issues. The publications generally received positive feedback, as did the move to produce web tables rather than paper publications. Users found the publications to be comprehensive, containing useful commentary. Some less frequent users felt that there could be better signposting and labelling in the publications.

A2.6 Several users noted the importance of local breakdowns of data and identified a need to have as wide a range of breakdowns as possible. Some users of road casualty data expressed concern about the quality of the statistics while other users felt that these statistics met their needs adequately. Several users were dissatisfied with the delay in publication and felt that more timely statistics could be useful.

### **Key documents/links provided**

Written Evidence for Assessment document



