

# Assessment of Scottish Labour Market Statistics

*produced by Scottish Government*

## Assessment Report 27

December 2009

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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 AND DESIGNATION**

Under the provisions of the *Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007*, the UK Statistics Authority has a statutory function to assess sets of statistics against the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, with a view to determining whether it is appropriate for the statistics to be designated, or to retain their designation, as National Statistics.

Designation as National Statistics means that the statistics are deemed to be compliant with the Code of Practice. Whilst the Code is wide-ranging, designation may be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics meet identified user needs; are produced, managed and disseminated to high standards; and are well explained.

Designation also signifies that, subject to any caveats in this report, the Statistics Authority judges that the statistics are readily accessible, produced according to sound methods and managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Assessment reports will not normally comment further, for example on the validity of the statistics as a social or economic measure; though reports may point to such questions if the Authority believes that further research would be desirable.

Designation as National Statistics will sometimes be granted in cases where some changes still need to be made to meet fully the requirements of the Code, on condition that steps are taken by the producer body, within a stated timeframe, to address the weaknesses. This is to avoid public confusion and does not reduce the obligation to comply with the Code.

Designation is granted on the basis of the information provided to the Statistics Authority, primarily by the organisation that produces the statistics. The information includes a range of factual evidence and also assurances by the producer organisation. The views of users are also sought. Should further information come to light subsequently which changes the Authority's analysis, the Assessment report may be withdrawn and revised as necessary.

Once designated as National Statistics, it is a statutory requirement on the producer organisation to ensure that the set of statistics continues to be produced, managed and disseminated 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 prepared under the provisions of the *Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007*<sup>1</sup>. The report covers two sets of National Statistics produced by the Scottish Government:

- *Public Sector Employment in Scotland*<sup>2</sup>,
- *Local Area Labour Markets in Scotland*<sup>3</sup>.

*Public Sector Employment in Scotland* includes a section that presents official statistics (not National Statistics) on the Scottish Government's Simplification Programme.

1.1.2 This report also covers *Work and Worklessness Among Households in Scotland*<sup>4</sup>, a set of official statistics published by the Scottish Government for the first time in October 2009. The Scottish Government has requested that the UK Statistics Authority assesses this product for designation as National Statistics.

1.1.3 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.

## 1.2 Decision concerning designation as National Statistics

1.2.1 The Statistics Authority confirms that:

- the statistics published in *Public Sector Employment in Scotland* (PSES) and *Local Area Labour Markets in Scotland* (LALMS) are designated as National Statistics, subject to the Scottish Government implementing the enhancements listed in section 1.5 below and reporting them to the Authority by March 2010. The official statistics on the Scottish Government's Simplification Programme, currently published in PSES, should remain as official statistics (not National Statistics) until such time as they have been the subject of a further assessment;

and has determined that

- *Work and Worklessness Among Households in Scotland* (WWAHS) can be designated as a new National Statistics product, subject to the Scottish Government implementing the enhancements listed in section 1.5 below and reporting them to the Authority by March 2010.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2007/ukpga\\_20070018\\_en\\_1](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2007/ukpga_20070018_en_1)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/09/15140059/0>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/07/28092044/0>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/10/13170230/0>

### 1.3 Summary of strengths and weaknesses

- 1.3.1 The Scottish Government has engaged with users of labour market statistics through a user day and various consultations. User engagement up to the time of this assessment has focused on the LALMS publication and associated web tables, and has been effective in reshaping these products towards user needs. There is scope for further user engagement on the PSES.
- 1.3.2 The Scottish Government makes labour market statistics available in a wide range of formats. The publications include commentary about the operational and policy context of the statistics, and clear caveats about the reliability of the data. WWAHS includes an easy reference tool for understanding the reliability of the local authority level data. PSES includes comprehensive tables of data but these are difficult to read in the publication.
- 1.3.3 PSES includes a section on *Simplifying the public sector landscape* but does not explain the relevance of employment statistics to the Scottish Government Simplification Programme. It is difficult to compare employment statistics for public bodies with the other employment statistics presented in PSES.

### 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 below. 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> | Take steps to engage more effectively with users of <i>Public Sector Employment in Scotland</i> and of <i>Work and Worklessness Among Households in Scotland</i> , and make those steps known. Also agree to publish, in 2010, details of <i>Public Sector Employment in Scotland</i> and <i>Work and Worklessness Among Households in Scotland</i> user needs, the uses made of these statistics and users' experiences of using these statistics (para 3.4). |
| <b>Requirement 2</b> | Ensure that information on the National Statistics Publication Hub on these statistics is kept up to date and announce the month of publication for all these statistics 12 months in advance (para 3.7).  |
| <b>Requirement 3</b> | Publish annually the estimated cost of the burden on suppliers of data for <i>Public Sector Employment in Scotland</i> (para 3.24).  |

**Requirement 4**

Publish the Simplification Programme statistics separately from the *Public Sector Employment in Scotland* publication (paras 3.31 to 3.33).

## 2 Subject of the assessment

- 2.1 *Public Sector Employment in Scotland (PSES)*, *Local Area Labour Markets in Scotland (LALMS)* and *Work and Worklessness Among Households in Scotland (WWAHS)* present statistics about the Scottish labour market. They draw on UK-wide labour market statistics produced by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and other data collected in Scotland. The UK statistics, along with labour market statistics for Wales and for Northern Ireland are the subject of separate assessments by the UK Statistics Authority.
- 2.2 PSES shows the number of people employed in the public sector in Scotland as defined by UK National Accounts<sup>5</sup>. The statistical release shows employment by type of public body and distinguishes between employment in devolved and reserved bodies. It is published quarterly at the same time as an equivalent ONS publication for the UK, and provides a complete quarterly series from Quarter 1 1999 onwards.
- 2.3 PSES provide a measure of the size and composition of the public sector in Scotland. Members of the Scottish Parliament and society are likely to want to know what share of total employment in Scotland is accounted for by the public sector and how that share has been changing. The publication also presents employment statistics for those public bodies that are the focus of Scottish Government's Simplification Programme to reshape Scotland's public bodies<sup>6</sup>.
- 2.4 Until 2006, the Scottish Government published statistics on employment in Scottish local authorities collected through the Joint Staffing Watch Survey<sup>7</sup>. Following recommendations made in the Allsopp Review<sup>8</sup> and also general user demand, the Scottish Government worked with ONS to develop estimates for total public sector employment in Scotland. The data are supplied by the Scottish Government's Human Resources department, local authorities (through the Joint Staffing Watch Survey) and Non Departmental Public Bodies. The series also uses data collected by ONS through comprehensive quarterly surveys of the UK Civil Service, Non-Departmental Public Bodies and Public Corporations.
- 2.5 LALMS is published annually and provides analysis and commentary across a range of labour market issues for different geographies, including local authority level data. It presents statistics on employment, unemployment and economic inactivity. Analyses are also presented by ethnicity, gender and disability. The publication was formerly known as the *Annual Population Survey Scotland - a compendium of labour market statistics*. The name was changed in 2008, in response to user consultation, to better reflect the content and purpose of the publication.
- 2.6 The data source is the Annual Population Survey (APS) which combines results from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and an annual Scottish boost

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<sup>5</sup> information on the classification of organisations and institutions in the National Accounts can be found on the ONS website: <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/CCI/SearchRes.asp?term=ma23>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/PublicServiceReform/simplifyingpublicservices>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Labour-Market/JointStaffingWatchSurvey>

<sup>8</sup> see [http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/press\\_allsopp\\_03.htm](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/press_allsopp_03.htm)

carried out by ONS. The Scottish boost is funded by the Scottish Government to enable reliable estimates to be made at local authority level and costs around £800,000.

- 2.7 The APS is the largest annual household survey in Scotland and provides a wealth of information about individuals' personal circumstances and their work. The Scottish Parliament, local and central government and a wide range of public and private sector bodies are interested in LALMS as the primary source of information on local labour markets in Scotland.
- 2.8 The Scottish Government sees the labour market as a key driver of its single overarching Purpose, 'to increase sustainable economic growth'<sup>9</sup>. It uses LALMS to inform the development of its policies and to monitor labour market trends. LALMS is the source of information for two of the Scottish Government's Purpose targets and one of the 45 national indicators in the Scottish Government's National Performance Framework<sup>10</sup>. Many external organisations use LALMS data for monitoring performance against targets, policy development and briefing.
- 2.9 *Work and Worklessness among Households in Scotland (WWAHS)* was published by the Scottish Government for the first time in October 2009. It provides information on the economic activity of working-age households, and on the adults and children living in them. Like LALMS, it is based on data from the APS.

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/About/purposestratobjts>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/About/scotPerforms>

### 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 For LALMS, the Scottish Government carried out a short user consultation exercise in 2008 and a more extensive consultation in 2009. It published reports on the findings from these consultations on its website<sup>11</sup>. These reports document the needs of users and the uses made of LALMS.
- 3.2 The 2009 consultation report describes the changes to be made to LALMS to meet user needs. It explains that users of LALMS would accept a one month delay to the publication to allow time for enhanced commentary. These changes were made for the July 2009 publication. The Scottish Government plans to seek user feed-back on these changes in spring 2010.
- 3.3 The Scottish Government receives many *ad hoc* requests for APS data. It keeps a log of these requests and adds additional tables to its website to publish results that are frequently asked for. Users frequently request the most up-to-date APS data. The Scottish Government receives quarterly APS data from ONS on a rolling-year basis (not broken down by quarter) with a time lag of approximately four months. The Scottish Government decided against producing quarterly reports on LALMS as it thought that this would be confusing and because the changes between rolling years tend to be small.
- 3.4 There is little published information on the users of PSES or on its main uses. The Scottish Government intends to consult users of PSES over the next year. Users contacted by the Assessment Team identified unmet needs for information on salaries, for information at local authority level and for comparisons with other parts of the UK. We suggest that the Scottish Government explores these issues as part of its planned consultation next year. As part of the designation as National Statistics, the Scottish Government should take steps to engage more effectively with users of PSES and of WWAHS, and make such steps known. It should also agree to publish, in 2010, details of PSES and of WWAHS user needs, the uses made of these statistics and users' experiences of using these statistics (Requirement 1)<sup>12</sup>.
- 3.5 The Scottish Government convened a labour market statistics user day in March 2009 for users and published the proceedings on its website<sup>13</sup>. An outcome of this event was the establishment of a new labour market statistics user forum which is due to meet for the first time in early 2010.

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Labour-Market/scotstat>

<sup>12</sup> In relation to Principle 1 Practices 1, 2 and 5 of the Code of Practice.

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Labour-Market/scotstat>

## Principle 2: Impartiality and objectivity

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

- 3.6 The Scottish Government announces the month of publication for statistical releases 12 months in advance, and the actual date of release one month before the release. The list of forthcoming statistical publications is available on the Scottish Government website. At the time of the assessment this list included dates for the following four quarterly releases of PSES, and WWAHS 2008, but did not give an anticipated date for the publication of LALMS 2009 (due summer 2010).
- 3.7 At the time of the assessment, there were no future editions of PSES listed on the National Statistics Publications Hub<sup>14</sup> and LALMS 2008 was listed under its old name (*Annual Population Survey Scotland - a compendium*). As part of the designation as National Statistics, the Scottish Government should ensure that information on the National Statistics Publication Hub on these statistics is kept up to date and that the Scottish Government announces the month of publication for all these statistics 12 months in advance<sup>15</sup> (Requirement 2).
- 3.8 The Scottish Government has published a revisions policy for PSES on its website<sup>16</sup>. For LALMS, the Scottish Government told us that it makes minor revisions to the publication tables to correct any errors as soon as possible and these are clearly marked. If the scope of the error is considered to be extensive, the Scottish Government contacts all known users of the publication.
- 3.9 These statistical products are available free of charge on the Scottish Government website. The Scottish Government publishes a set of rates that it may charge for additional statistical services.
- 3.10 LALMS 2008 included UK comparisons for employment, unemployment and economic inactivity but not for 16-19 year olds who are not in employment and not in training<sup>17</sup>. Scotland has tended to have higher levels of young people in this category than the average for the UK<sup>18</sup> and there is a risk that the omission of a comparable figure could be interpreted as biased reporting. The Scottish Government explained that no UK comparison was given because different measurement processes are used in England, and ONS currently uses a different definition to that used by the Department for Children, Schools and Families. Given the policy importance of this group, we support the work being undertaken by the Scottish Government and the ONS to improve the comparability of these statistics. We suggest that the Scottish Government provides details in the LALMS report to explain why UK comparisons are not given for 16-19 year olds who are not in employment and not in training.

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<sup>14</sup> <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/hub/index.html>

<sup>15</sup> In relation to Principle 2 Practice 1 and Protocol 2 Practices 2 and 3 of the Code of Practice

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/12/PSERevisionsPolicy>

<sup>17</sup> See Scottish Government 2006 *More Choices, More Chances: A Strategy to Reduce the Proportion of Young People not in Education, Employment or Training in Scotland* available at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/06/13100205/16>

<sup>18</sup> see <http://www.edascot.org.uk/resources/Scottish%20Executive%20presentation.pdf>

### **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.**

- 3.11 For the two most recent statistical releases of products covered by this assessment (PSES Q2 2009 and WWAHS 2008), the Scottish Government published two separate news releases: a statistical news release issued by the Chief Statistician, and a news release issued by the press office with ministerial comment (the PSES release is discussed further under Protocol 2).
- 3.12 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.**

- 3.13 Most of the figures given in PSES are the numbers (given as headcount and full time equivalent) of staff employed in the last month of the reporting quarter. The exceptions are: data supplied by the NHS, which are based on projections, and data supplied by ONS relating to UK-wide public corporations with a presence in Scotland, for which the Scottish share of the UK-wide employment is estimated according to the Inter Departmental Business Register (updated annually)<sup>19</sup>. From December 2009 onwards, the NHS has agreed to supply quarterly extracts from its administrative system.
- 3.14 The PSES statistics are not seasonally adjusted, although the Scottish Government is currently considering this. Users are advised to compare the current quarter with the same quarter from the previous year.
- 3.15 When changes are made to the classification of public bodies, the Scottish Government considers how to provide consistent historical data on a case by case basis. For example, in February 2009, ONS announced that two major banking groups would be classified as public corporations to take effect from October 2008. The Scottish Government responded by revising the historical data and by presenting separate statistics on the public sector including and excluding public sector financial institutions.
- 3.16 The Scottish Government has worked with ONS to review the definitions of public bodies in order to achieve consistency of definitions across the UK. This has entailed extensive discussions over the last year, but is now nearly complete. The definitions of all but two public bodies are now consistent. The classification of Audit Scotland and Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) is still being considered.
- 3.17 The ONS is responsible for the methods and quality of the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and the APS, which provide the basis for the data published in LALMS and WWHAS. For details of the assessment of the LFS against principle 4 of the Code of Practice, please refer to the forthcoming assessment of ONS' Labour Market Statistics.

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<sup>19</sup> <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/idbr/idbr.asp>

## 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.**

- 3.18 The production of these statistics meets the requirements for confidentiality. Data for LALMS and WWHAS are derived from anonymised data supplied by ONS from the APS. Data for PSES are collected in aggregate form. The Scottish Government has published a statement to interviewees on protecting the confidentiality of their data<sup>20</sup> as well as a detailed explanation of the processes employed to protect their confidentiality in published outputs<sup>21</sup>. No evidence of any leak or inadvertent disclosure was found.
- 3.19 APS data are owned by ONS. Before providing its researchers with access to microdata, the Scottish Government first seeks approval for access from ONS. The Scottish Government will only allow its researchers access to anonymised data based on signed acknowledgement of their obligations under the code. No third parties have access to the data.
- 3.20 The Scottish Government has assured us that it has appropriate arrangements in place that govern access to, and storage of, the data.

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<sup>20</sup> [http://www.statistics.gov.uk/ssd/taking\\_part.asp](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/ssd/taking_part.asp)

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/933/0080063.doc>  
and <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/933/0076518.doc>

## 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.**

- 3.21 The LFS survey is voluntary and the boosted sample for Scotland enables analysis at local level. ONS is responsible for managing and monitoring the burden on respondents.
- 3.22 As part of this assessment, the Authority contacted some data suppliers for PSES. The suppliers reported that the process of supplying data was straightforward. The Scottish Government requests data on a regular basis in a consistent format. This enables suppliers to ensure that their own data management systems produce the data in the format required, so that quarterly data returns can be compiled very quickly.
- 3.23 The Scottish Government reported that it had explored possible ways of reducing the burden to PSES data suppliers. In 2006, it reviewed the survey questionnaire and significantly reduced the amount of information collected by reducing the number of service groups and ending the collection of data by salary bands. The review found that collection of data by salary bands was not cost effective and did not produce good quality data. The Scottish Government has explored alternative options for collecting the data but has not found these to be suitable. For example, the 'number of teachers' is collected by the teacher census but this collects the number teaching on a particular day rather than the number employed.
- 3.24 The Scottish Government had not published an estimate of the cost of data collection to data suppliers as the producer team considered the cost to be minimal. As part of the designation of the PSES as National Statistics, the Scottish Government should publish annually the estimated cost of the burden on suppliers of data for PSES (Requirement 3)<sup>22</sup>.

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<sup>22</sup> In relation to Principle 6 Practice 1 of the Code of Practice.

## 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.**

- 3.25 Responsibility for producing these statistics lies with the Labour Market Statistics Branch in the Scottish Government. The team appears to have an adequate level of support and funding. Although the recession has resulted in a recent increase in demand for analysis of the data, this has been matched by an increase in staff in the branch, up from 3.5 to 5 full-time equivalent posts. The Scottish Government has recruitment procedures in place for staff which take into account an appropriate competence framework. New staff in the team are given specific training in the use of the team's database.

## Principle 8: Frankness and accessibility

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

- 3.26 The Scottish Government makes these statistics available in a wide variety of formats and levels of detail. Public Sector Employment statistics are disseminated through a web summary, a statistical news release, the main publication and web tables (available in html and Excel). Statistics are presented in graphical forms (maps, bar charts, pie charts) as well as tabulated numerical data.
- 3.27 The publications include commentary about the operational and policy context of the statistics, including references to current government performance targets. Time series are given to show progress towards these targets.
- 3.28 The font size for the data and the footnotes in some tables in the PSES publication is too small to be easily legible. We suggest that the Scottish Government reformats the tables to increase the font size or replaces them with links to web-based tables. The data tables in the annex of the quarterly PSES publication make up the complete record of these statistics from 1999 onwards. We suggest that the Scottish Government creates an archive for the PSES statistics and presents a more limited set within the quarterly publications.
- 3.29 The LALMS publication includes annexes with information on how to use the data, with information on confidence intervals, and how to access full APS data sets. A list of the main concepts and definitions used is provided, but this does not include technical terms for the more detailed analyses (for example, the classification system for occupation type). We suggest that the Scottish Government provides links in the LALMS publication to ONS documentation of the definitions and classification systems used for the APS and LFS.
- 3.30 The WWAHS publication includes links to the relevant ONS user guides for LFS. It also includes a “Ready Reckoner for Reliability of Key Household series by local authority”. This uses a system of colour coding to provide a clear summary of data reliability at local authority level.
- 3.31 PSES includes a section for official statistics on *Simplifying the public sector landscape*. The section describes the Scottish Government Simplification Programme which aims to reshape Scotland’s public bodies and the associated National Indicator. It includes a table that presents:
- (a) quarterly statistics on the total number of public bodies that are the focus of the Simplification Programme; and
  - (b) quarterly statistics on headcount employment for these bodies.
- 3.32 The Assessment team has the following concerns with these statistics:
- It is unclear why the statistics in (a) are included in a release on public sector employment.

- The statistics in (b) are presented using a different classification system from that used to present other employment statistics in the PSES publication. This makes it difficult to compare these different employment statistics.
- It is not clear what is the relevance of the statistics in (b) to the Simplification Programme and what user need these statistics are intended to meet.
- There is a risk that users could make invalid associations between changes in the number of public sector employees and the Simplification Programme.

3.33 As part of the designation as National Statistics the Scottish Government should publish statistics for the Simplification Programme separately from the PSES publication<sup>23</sup> (Requirement 4). This will help to address some of these concerns, although these statistics should remain as official statistics (not National Statistics) until such time as they have been the subject of a further assessment.

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<sup>23</sup> In relation to Principle 8 Practice 2

## **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.**

3.34 See Principle 1.

## 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.**

- 3.35 On the same day as the Scottish Government published PSES statistics for 2009 Q2, it published a news release on its website that provided a ministerial statement commenting on the release<sup>24</sup>. The first line of the news release was misleading in that it did not clearly state that the quoted fall in public sector employment in Scotland excluded two financial institutions that had recently been classified to the public sector.
- 3.36 A list of individuals with pre-release access to these statistics in their final form, together with information on how long these individuals have pre-release access and the reasons for granting access, is available on request. We suggest that the Scottish Government publishes records of those granted pre-release access to these statistics in their final form.
- 3.37 The pre-release access lists for these statistics include the names of around 50 people who have access for briefing purposes. The Scottish Government explained that the large number of people involved in briefing was due to the wide range of policy areas with an interest in these statistics.

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<sup>24</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2009/09/16110840>

### **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.**

3.38 The PSES data are collected from a variety of sources. Alternative administrative sources are being investigated to reduce this burden (see para 3.23). Details of any such sources used should be included in the Scottish Government's Statement of Administrative Sources, the publication of which was a requirement in Assessment Report 2<sup>25</sup>.

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<sup>25</sup> Requirement 5 in Assessment Report 2: Recorded Crime in Scotland (<http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-2---recorded-crime-in-scotland--24-february-2009.pdf>)

## Annex 1: Suggestions for improvement

A1.1 This annex includes some suggestions for improvement to the Scottish Government's statistical outputs, 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.

- |                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| <b>Suggestion 1</b> | Consult PSES users on whether there are significant unmet needs for information on salaries, for information at local authority level and for comparisons with other parts of the UK (para 3.4). |
| <b>Suggestion 2</b> | Provide details in the LALMS report to explain why UK comparisons are not given for 16-19 year olds who are not in employment and not in training (para 3.10).                                   |
| <b>Suggestion 3</b> | Reformat the tables in the PSES publication to increase the font size or replace them with links to web-based tables (para 3.28).  |
| <b>Suggestion 4</b> | Create an archive for the PSES statistics and present a more limited set within the quarterly publications (para 3.28).  |
| <b>Suggestion 5</b> | Provide links in the LALMS publication to ONS documentation of the definitions and classification systems used for the APS and LFS (para 3.29).  |
| <b>Suggestion 6</b> | Publish records of those granted pre-release access to these statistics in their final form (para 3.36).   |

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

A2.1 This assessment was conducted from September to December 2009.

A2.2 The Assessment team agreed the scope of and timetable for this assessment with representatives of the Scottish Government in September 2009. The Scottish Government provided background information and written evidence for assessment to the assessment team in September 2009. The Assessment team subsequently met with the Scottish Government in October to review compliance with the Code of Practice, taking account of the written evidence provided and other relevant sources of evidence. The Scottish Government provided further written evidence following this meeting.

### Summary of users contacted, and issues raised

A2.3 The Assessment team received 9 responses from the user consultation. The respondents were grouped as follows:

Government (UK and Scottish)	3
Local Authority	2
Scottish Parliament	2
Other	2

A2.4 The users of PSES reported that it would be more useful to them if it included information on public sector employment salaries and local authority level data and was more directly comparable with similar statistics from other parts of the UK. Users of LALMS appreciated the text and depth of analyses but reported that its usefulness was limited by the long time lag between data collection and reporting. Users reported that they were satisfied with the way that the Scottish Government had responded to enquiries. One user commented that the Scottish Government had been slow to respond to suggestions for changes to the classifications used for PSES in order to align them with the classification system used by ONS.

A2.5 Five data suppliers for PSES were interviewed as part of this assessment; three from UK government civil service employers and two from Non Departmental Public Bodies. Their comments are summarised under Principle 6.

### Key documents/links provided

All publications, datasets and consultation documents are available from the Scottish Government website, via the labour market statistics topic page:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Labour-Market>

Direct links to publications:

PSES <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/09/15140059/0>

LLAMS <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/07/28092044/0>

WWAHS <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/10/13170230/0>

Press Release including Ministerial Comment for PSES:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2009/09/16110840>

Statistics News Release for PSES:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2009/09/16103641>  
Statistical News Release for LALMS  
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2009/07/29104422>

## List of assessment reports published to date<sup>26</sup>

1. Statistics from the National Drug Treatment Monitoring System  
*National Treatment Agency for Substance Misuse*
2. Recorded Crime in Scotland  
*Scottish Government*
3. Statistics on Enrolments at Schools and in Funded Pre-School Education in Northern Ireland  
*Department of Education, Northern Ireland*
4. Road Casualty Statistics  
*Department for Transport*
5. UK Energy Sector Indicators  
*Department of Energy and Climate Change*
6. Statistics on Road Freight  
*Department for Transport*
7. Prison Population Projections  
*Ministry of Justice*
8. Migration Statistics  
*Office for National Statistics*
9. Statistics on International Development and the ODA:GNI Ratio  
*Department for International Development*
10. The Scottish Health Survey  
*Scottish Government*
11. Scottish House Condition Survey  
*Scottish Government*
12. Scottish Crime and Justice Survey  
*Scottish Government*
13. Statistics on Children Looked After by Local Authorities in England  
*Department for Children, Schools and Families*
14. Statistics on Children Looked After by Local Authorities in Scotland  
*Scottish Government*
15. Statistics on Children Looked After by Local Authorities in Wales  
*Welsh Assembly Government*
16. Statistics on Children Looked After by Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland  
*Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, Northern Ireland*
17. Wealth in Great Britain  
*Office for National Statistics*
18. Statistics on the National Child Measurement Programme  
*NHS Information Centre*
19. Average Weekly Earnings  
*Office for National Statistics*
20. Energy Statistics  
*Department of Energy and Climate Change*

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<sup>26</sup> Published reports are available at: <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment-reports/index.html>

