
Health and Care Statistics Round Table 3rd meeting on 15th June 2017

- List of attendees provided in Annex 1

Meeting Summary

Opening by the Director General for Regulation

1. Ed Humpherson opened the meeting by welcoming everyone to the third Round Table meeting. He went on to outline the importance of these discussions; users within and outside health and social care services and government need and deserve better, more coherent and more insightful statistics to inform choices, decisions, and public debate. This Round Table was brought together by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) to discuss at a strategic level how to improve the coherence and accessibility of such important statistics and data.
2. Ed reflected that the last Round Table in December had requested a discussion about possible models for the official statistics system that organises the collection and publication of health and social care statistics in England. Before the wider discussion of the statistical system began, Ed invited representatives of the English Health Statistics Steering Group (EHSSG) to update the group on progress made since the [2nd Round Table in December](#).

Update of progress from the EHSSG

3. Chris Roebuck and Jen Woolford provided the group with an overview of the [draft Principles](#) statisticians from different organisations would work under, as well as the joint [vision](#) statement for those producing health and care statistics. The aims include giving users access to a seamless statistics and advice service, having a rapid response, improving the presentation of outputs, developing information sources and supporting the development of analytical skills.
4. The EHSSG has also published their [Terms of Reference](#) and [work plan](#), including a set of deliverables by priority, along with a 'landscape' [document](#) signposting different sets of health and social care statistics. These have all been published on the [Government Statistical Service](#) website, and producers are asking for feedback.
5. Round Table members highlighted that statisticians would need to meet a wide range of users' needs to ensure success. John Pullinger welcomed the vision as inclusive, with opportunities to create partnerships, and noting that improvements should come from the needs of users rather than the organisational structures. Ed noted that the draft Vision and Principles provided a template to think about what statistics are being produced and how user need is or isn't met.

Rethinking the system that produces health and care official statistics in England

6. Ed invited the group to discuss and identify the different aspects needed for the wider change programme in the health and care statistics system. To stimulate discussion OSR presented various options for how the system could potentially operate. The options included strengthening the current system, moving towards common use of a pool of linked data, or a more radical redesign with different organisations specialising in different aspects of statistical data collection, analysis and dissemination. In discussion, the Round Table members identified a number of aspects required for an effective system of health and social care statistics:

- Producers should respond to demand from the widest group of users, internal and external to government and the health service whilst bringing in external users to both thinking and analysis;
- Producers should be aware of wider context; reach out to a wide range of users; ensure new sources of data are brought into system;
- All organisations need to utilise data currently collected to its full potential. This should be within a particular organisation, across government and the health service, and for researchers outside official statistics;
- There is a need to ensure that the right expertise is within the system;
- There is a need to evaluate and learn from each change in the system;
- The producers in the system should learn from others outside health and care statistics – for example, the work going on in the Census;
- Roles within the system must be clear across organisations;
- A cross-organisation governance structure should be provided to address problems and set out strategic direction.

7. The group agreed that in the short term the focus would be on strengthening the existing system through the collaborative [work plan](#) set out by the EHSSG. This work plan is a good starting point. The longer term ambition of the group was to maximise the utility of data via creation of a central data repository which a wide network of analysts could use.

National Statistician's closing comments

8. John noted that there were lots of opportunities and that producers are ready to take them on and to take on the leadership of this agenda forward. He reminded the group that change should be all about the users. Producers need to understand users' questions, why these questions are asked, and work with all kinds of different people to answer the questions. John also reminded the group that partnerships will be the answer and internal partnerships are strong but now producers should develop open and inclusive partnerships with those outside. John commented that changes within the system must be future proofed through interaction, open engagement, listening to feedback, and performing iterations that will help the system to learn quickly. It will be important to avoid silos and be dynamic. Issues such as data governance, research ethics, data security and access to metadata will be vital to improvement.

Director General's closing comments

9. Ed closed the meeting by noting that he was encouraged by the progress of the EHSSG and the creativity within the Round Table discussion.

10. Ed announced that this would be the last Round Table he would Chair. The Round Table had been organised to bring together colleagues leading organisations responsible for producing Official Statistics to discuss and set a direction of travel to resolve the issues identified. The Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) could see that the discussion had matured over the past year, and Ed encouraged those at an executive level to continue to meet to set out the strategic

direction. This would ensure users (both internal and external to government and the health service) get the best information possible. OSR would be happy to attend these meetings, but felt it should no longer chair the meetings. The producers should now consider who best to take on this role.

11. OSR will continue to undertake regulatory activities on health and care statistics, including monitoring progress against the EHSSG action plan; considering whether user needs are being met; and reviewing the compliance of individual sets of statistics. In this way OSR will continue to act as an agent for change. OSR will also focus to a greater extent on cross-UK comparability. Finally OSR is planning a 2nd Health and Social Care Summit to be held late autumn which will be an opportunity for broader user engagement in this agenda.

Annex 1:

Attendees:

- Ed Humpherson, Director General for Regulation (Chair)
- Professor David Hand OBE FBA
- John Pullinger, National Statistician
- Ian Cope, ONS
- Emma Rourke, ONS
- Jen Woolford, ONS
- Helen Fox, ONS
- Daniel Ray, NHS Digital
- Chris Roebuck, NHS Digital
- Mark Svenson, DH
- Ben Dyson, NHS Improvement
- Peter Walsh, NHS England
- Sharon Witherspoon, ADRN
- Siva Anandaciva, King's Fund
- Kerstin Hinds, Office for Statistics Regulation
- Caroline Jones, Office for Statistics Regulation
- Emma Nash, Office for Statistics Regulation
- Kim Cullen, Office for Statistics Regulation

Apologies:

- Professor Sir Adrian Smith FRS
- Dame Moira Gibb OBE
- Professor Jonathan Haskel
- Chris Wormald, DH
- Ed Rose, NHS England
- Noel Gordon, NHS Digital
- Professor John Newton, Public Health England
- Ed Smith, NHS Improvement
- Richard Murray, King's Fund
- Peter Whitehouse, Scottish Government
- Liz Owen, CQC
- John Appleby, Nuffield Trust