
Director General for Regulation

Iain Bell
Deputy National Statistician
(By email)

12 February 2018

Dear Iain,

The Office for Statistics Regulation has today published its summary¹ of two migration roundtable events that it convened last autumn as part of its systemic review programme. The events focused on the topics of *international migration, employment and business*, and *international migration and service delivery*, and revealed a range of specific but also common information needs for stakeholders working in these areas. The summary report also contains the actions volunteered by the statistics producers attending to address these stakeholders' information needs.

OSR was pleased to see evidence of effective cross-government working at the roundtables. The stakeholders attending expressed their support for the various ideas proposed by the producers, but particularly, the cross-GSS plan to enhance the migration analyses available by linking government administrative data in light of the Digital Economy Act.

While this is promising, the need for urgency in implementing the plan is clear, as is the need for continued cross-departmental collaboration given that the plan is dependent on data held across various departments. The report therefore includes a recommendation for ONS to coordinate an update of the GSS's plan, to set out the roles of the individual departments in addressing stakeholders' identified needs, with timings for delivering the required improvements. The plan should also provide clarity about how stakeholders will be kept informed about any newly developed migration statistics outputs and it should be easily accessible.

OSR will monitor producers' progress against the commitments made and will seek an update from you on the GSS's overall progress in May. I would also appreciate your support to ensure that the current momentum and cross-government collaboration, is maintained, and that any possible barriers to progress both within and between departments are anticipated and overcome.

Given the GSS's progress, the common themes coming out of the first two roundtables, and that we currently await improvements in ONS's understanding of international student migration outcomes following our compliance check² last year, we have decided not to hold our previously planned roundtable on international migration and higher education at this stage. We will keep this under review but will be interested to see how the GSS is able to respond to stakeholders' broader information needs in the education area, using data held by the Department for Education.

¹ <https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/news/international-migration-roundtables-summary>

² <https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/publication/the-quality-of-long-term-student-migration-statistics/>

I am copying this letter to John Pullinger, the National Statistician; David Blunt, Chief Statistician at the Home Office; Jon Simmons, Head of Migration and Border Analysis at the Home Office; Sean Whellams, Head of Profession for Statistics at HM Revenue and Customs; Stephen Balchin, Head of Profession for Statistics at the Department for Work and Pensions; Neil McIvor, Head of Profession for Statistics at the Department for Education; and Mark Svenson, Head of Profession for Statistics at the Department of Health.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ed Humpherson', written in a cursive style.

Ed Humpherson

Director General for Regulation