

OFFICE FOR STATISTICS REGULATION

2019/20 Regulatory Work Programme



Office for
Statistics Regulation

Introduction

This document sets out our priorities for the 2019/20 regulatory work programme, and can be read together with our [business plan](#) which sets out our broader strategy.

This is a rolling work programme and updates will be published each quarter to: add projects as they come on-stream in-year; and report on the latest status of each project (for example, whether it is live or completed). While the work programme already includes some projects which are confirmed for later in 2019/20 this plan should not be viewed as our full 12-month programme. We have not fully committed our resources from the start of the year to allow scope to respond to emerging issues.

The programme focuses on our regulatory activity – assessments, compliance checks and systemic reviews, but we have expanded it this year to outline some of the wider aspects of our work.

How we have arrived at our priorities

This work programme sets out our priorities for 2019/20 within the context of our developing vision and mission. Drivers for 2019/20 are the first step towards delivering our vision and provide the link between our longer-term mission and the priorities for our work programme in 2019/20. In making our judgements we also applied the three criteria shown below. We then engaged widely on the proposed priorities in early 2019, with a series of round tables in the four countries of the UK and engagement with producers and users of statistics and data through our domain topic leads and our devolved leads.

Criteria

- The project has the potential to make a strong contribution to our 2019/20 drivers:
 - Enhance trustworthiness, quality and value of key official statistics
 - Advocate trustworthiness, quality and value inside and outside of government
 - Identify risks to the use of statistics in public debate and respond through casework
 - Develop understanding of the public good in collaboration with allies and develop a framework for judging misleadingness
 - Understand the changing world and impact for statistics production
- The aims of the project would be strongly and clearly rooted in delivering on one or more dimensions of Trustworthiness, Quality, and Value:
 - Trustworthy – they have been prepared by professionally-independent statisticians, free from political pressure
 - High quality – they are produced using sound methods and based on reliable sources
 - Valuable – they provide insight, support decision-making and inform debate.
- The anticipated project outcomes are worthy of the level of investment of resource that the proposed choice and scale of regulatory tool indicates

Some of the assessments listed have been discussed with officials from the relevant departments but remain subject to formal ministerial approval.

The work programme is presented by statistical domain and sets out the broad schedule for our activities.

Our tools	Purpose	Description	Can be initiated by	Producer input	Output/ Outcome
Compliance check	Review compliance with Code of Practice for Statistics – often focused on specific principles. Make a judgement on whether National Statistics status should continue.	This is a flexible tool which allows OSR to respond to specific issues quickly and extends our view across the statistical system. It can focus on specific principles or act as a preliminary investigation to consider whether a full assessment is needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - OSR: regular planning and stakeholder consultation cycle or emerging intelligence in-year - Request by Head of Profession for Statistics 	No preparation from the producer is expected and the review is intended to be undertaken with minimal disruption to the producer organisation. Experience suggests that there are likely to be recommendations for the producer to consider after the compliance check.	<p>OSR will write to producers setting out the outcome and highlighting strengths and weaknesses of the statistics. There are four possible outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - removal of National Statistics status (de-designation); - follow up with full assessment; - recommendations to producer; or - no follow-up necessary. <p>Compliance checks do not lead to new National Statistics designations.</p>
Assessment	Determine whether statistics meet the criteria to become (or remain) National Statistics.	We assess (or re-assess) statistics against the Code of Practice for Statistics. Phase 1 is the assessment and publication of the Assessment Report. Phase 2 is the follow up on any Requirements with the producers of the statistics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - OSR: regular planning and stakeholder consultation cycle or emerging intelligence in-year - Request by Head of Profession for Statistics 	Where possible producers are involved in agreeing the assessment timetable and will have input throughout the assessment. OSR works with producers to agree an action plan to address any requirements.	Designation (or de-designation) as National Statistics. Usually accompanied by a set of requirements to ensure statistics meet NS standards. OSR will produce an Assessment Report and write a letter to the producer. There will also be a follow up letter once all requirements have been met, and National Statistics status has been confirmed by the Regulation Committee.
Systemic review	Address issues that span across different producers to ensure statistics have high public value and meet user needs.	These will always cover multiple outputs or products, and can be specific to a domain or cut across domains. Projects will involve considerable engagement with users and often include events to support change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - OSR: regular planning and stakeholder consultation cycle or emerging intelligence in-year - We invite proposals via our website 	Producers will be consulted as part of any review process and we often bring together statistics producers and users to support improvement. This could be small expert round tables or large summits.	We report publicly on the findings of systemic reviews (Phase 1) and will usually include broad recommendations targeted at the statistics system and write letters to producers. We may produce a standard report, but might also report in other ways e.g. through meeting notes or blogs. Phase 2 follows up on recommendations.
Casework	Reduce misuse of statistics and support code compliance.	We investigate and form a judgement on the use of official statistics, and issues raised with us around Code compliance on a case by case basis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Concerns raised with us by the public, media, parliament etc. - OSR: through our horizon scanning 	Producers may be asked questions about their statistics to support OSR reach our judgement.	Public comment on the use of statistics or views on code compliance, most commonly through letters to relevant organisations or individuals, some of which are published on the Authority's website.

Domain	Estimated project will commence:	Project	Geographical Coverage	Type
Agriculture and Environment	Our 2019/20 focus will be on air quality and waste , reflecting the prominence of these topics in public debate. We will also work to understand how producers are engaging with users to meet changing demands for agriculture and environment statistics and data used as evidence. Agriculture and environment is one of the domains potentially most affected by the UK's exit from the EU , we will consider the implications of this for statistics in this area during 2019/20.			
	Enhance Trustworthiness, Quality and Value of key official statistics			
	First half of 2019/20	Review of approaches to user engagement across the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs agriculture and environment statistics portfolio	UK	Systemic Review
	Continuing from 2018/19	Air Quality Statistics in the UK and Emissions of Air Pollutants in the UK statistics (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs)	UK	Assessment
	Second half of 2019/20	Local Authority Municipal Waste Management statistics for all countries of UK (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (England); Scottish Environment Protection Agency (Scotland); Welsh Government (Wales); Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (NI))	England, Scotland, Wales, NI	Assessment (Scotland) and Compliance Checks
Business, Industry, Trade and Energy (BITE)	The evolution of BITE statistics is expected to be driven by the UK's exit from the EU , future trading relationships with Europe and the rest of the world, and the consequent changes in the broader economic and commercial environment. Our priorities for 2019/20 focus on these anticipated changes and the need for statistics to capture new business practices and process innovation, not least in digital infrastructure and content .			
	Enhance Trustworthiness, Quality and Value of key official statistics			

Continuing from 2018/19: Phase 1	Annual Purchases Survey (Office for National Statistics)	UK	Assessment
Continuing from 2018/19: Phase 2	UK Trade (Office for National Statistics)	UK	Assessment
Continuing from 2018/19	International Trade in Services (Office for National Statistics)	UK	Compliance Check
Continuing from 2018/19	Capital Stocks (Office for National Statistics)	UK	Compliance Check
Continuing from 2018/19	UK Gross Domestic Expenditure on Research and Development (Office for National Statistics)	UK	Compliance Check
First half of 2019/20	Business Activity and Demography Population Estimates (Office for National Statistics)	UK (with focus on countries and regions)	Compliance Check
First half of 2019/20	Insolvency statistics (Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy; Companies House; Account in Bankruptcy (Scotland))	UK	Compliance Checks
Second half of 2019/20	Retail Sales (Office for National Statistics)	GB	Compliance Check
<p>Across the UK, Children, Education and Skills policies vary significantly. Our priorities for 2019/20 reflect areas of public interest, both in terms of the use of statistics, and where there have been recent policy changes. Our priorities for 2019/20 are to: protect the role of education statistics used in public debate (particularly in England); review the attainment statistics of primary and secondary education in</p>			

Children, Education and Skills	the UK as key school outcome measures, and advocate for improvements in the availability and accessibility of information about Further Education and Apprenticeships in the UK.			
	Enhance trustworthiness, quality and value of key official statistics			
	Continuing from 2018/19: Phase 2	Public Value of Post-16 Education and Skills: Phase 2 will see the project extended to cover all four countries in the UK.	UK	Systemic Review
	First half of 2019/20	School Leaver Attainment and Initial Destinations statistics (Scottish Government)	Scotland	Compliance Check
	First half of 2019/20	Key Stage 4 and Multi-Academy Trust Performance (Department for Education)	England	Compliance Check
First half of 2019/20	Further Education and Skills (Department for Education)	England	Compliance Check	
Crime and Justice	Policing, crime and justice continue to be at the forefront of public debate. The focus on traditional crime remains, but the nature of crime is changing and newer forms of crime , especially those that are global and cyber-enabled, are harder to measure. Police and justice organisations face challenges to achieve the technological change needed to support evolving demand for data and statistics. In 2019/20 we want producers to deliver on the Code’s aspirations for public value and use statistics and data to tell more coherent stories within and beyond crime and justice, and to better reflect people’s experiences. We want the quality of data and statistics to be more transparent and for statistics producers to start to have a voice in decisions about data systems.			
	Enhance trustworthiness, quality and value of key official statistics			

	Continuing from 2018/19: Phase 2	Public Value of Policing Statistics: the focus in 2019/20 will be to produce the findings of our media analysis project.	UK	Systemic Review
	Continuing from 2018/19	NI Safer Communities Survey (Department of Justice): series of Compliance Checks culminating in an assessment.	NI	Assessment
	First half of 2019/20	Motoring Offences statistics for Northern Ireland (Police Service of Northern Ireland)	NI	Assessment
Culture and Identity	Culture and identity statistics and data should provide strong evidence that reflect peoples' experiences of how we are living and engaging within UK society. In 2019/20 we will focus on building our intelligence around this domain – understanding the statistics and data in scope and engaging with statistics producers and users, especially in Scotland and Wales. We will carry out compliance checks on statistics about the gambling industry and internet use , and we will look at how well statistics and data serve as evidence for understanding loneliness .			
	Enhance trustworthiness, quality and value of key official statistics			
	First half of 2019/20	Loneliness: is the statistical system fit for purpose? We will undertake a small systemic review to look across the countries of the UK at what statistics are available on loneliness and how far they meet the public need	UK	Systemic Review
	First half of 2019/20	Gambling Commission Industry statistics (Gambling Commission)	GB	Compliance Check
	Second half of 2019/20	Internet Use statistics (Office for National Statistics)	England	Compliance Check
Economy	We want to see UK and devolved nations' and regions' economic statistics fully transformed to capture all the activities in the respective economies, accounting for: major changes under way in the structure of the UK and devolved and regional economies ; the sustainability of economic growth; public interest in well-being; growing demand for better geographically disaggregated data; and statistics producers'			

capacity to adapt to the online world. Our priorities for 2019/20 are: the communication and **effects of changes to the UK National Accounts Blue Book** in 2019; **inflation** and the possibility of work arising from any change to the Authority's approach to the RPI and to Owner-Occupied Housing measurement within CPIH; continuing to examine statistics which help inform the **productivity puzzle**; and addressing one of the main causes of bias in forecasting **Scottish and Welsh income tax revenues** by conducting a special compliance check on HMRC's Survey of Personal Income.

Enhance trustworthiness, quality and value of key official statistics

Continuing from 2018/19: Phase 1	Public value of statistics on public finances in a devolved UK	Scotland and Wales	Systemic Review
Continuing from 2018/19: Phase 1	Country and Regional Analysis: Statistical estimates for the allocation of identifiable expenditure between the UK countries and 9 English regions (HM Treasury)	UK countries and regions	Assessment
Continuing from 2018/19	ONS communication of 2019 Blue Book changes (Office for National Statistics)	UK	Compliance Check
Continuing from 2018/19	Measuring Tax Gaps (HM Revenue and Customs)	UK	Compliance Check
Continuing from 2018/19	Labour Productivity (Office for National Statistics)	UK	Compliance Check
First half of 2019/20	Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing costs (CPIH) (Office for National Statistics)	UK	Compliance Check

Health and Social Care	<p>We want to see producers in all parts of the UK improve the trustworthiness, quality and value of their statistics, focusing in 2019/20 on mental health, social care, and peoples' experience so that they achieve the status of existing statistics about physical health, NHS performance and outputs. We will assess NHS England's hospital activity statistics and support the Scottish Parliament Health and Sport Committee's forthcoming inquiry around gaps in primary care statistics in Scotland. Other priorities in 2019/20 will be to encourage access to data, seeking potential solutions to the problems that researchers experience when trying to access data from NHS Digital, and to support collaboration between statistics producers who are linking and analysing data about cost, outcomes and people's lived experiences. We will also champion the joining-up of data on health and social care with data on other aspects of people's lives, including crime, justice, education, employment and welfare.</p>		
Enhance trustworthiness, quality and value of key official statistics			
Continuing from 2018/19: Phase 2	Public value of Social Care statistics in the UK: Adult social care statistics tend to be less developed than health statistics; we are exploring the position UK-wide, recognising policy variations across the devolved administrations have led to differences in how statistics are produced.	UK	Systemic Review
Continuing from 2018/19	Review of NHS Digital data access (follows on from Data Access and Data Linkage Systemic Review)	England	Systemic Review
First half of 2019/20	Mental Health: with a focus on statistics on: mental health outcomes; mental health workforce; and provision of statistics on the impact of the changing (data-driven) world on peoples' mental health.	UK	Systemic Review
Continuing from 2018/19: Phase 2	Cancer Survival (Office for National Statistics)	England	Assessment

	First half of 2019/20	Hospital Activity statistics (NHS England)	England	Assessment	
	First half of 2019/20	Investigate Primary Care statistics to support Scottish Parliament Committee Inquiry (submissions accepted from September 2019)	Scotland	Other	
Housing, Planning and Local Services	Our key priorities during 2017/18 and 2018/19 were driven by our Systemic Review on the public value of Statistics on Housing and Planning in the UK. For 2019/20 and beyond, our focus will be on the trustworthiness, quality and value of statistics about key issues: homelessness and rough sleeping; housing affordability; house building; and the private rental market . We are also acutely aware that with the public need for improved insight about housing and planning at increasingly local levels , there could be more focus on linking data , and developing new statistics and analysis that aren't traditional National Statistics. We will be developing our networks outside the official statistics producer community, to promote voluntary application of the Code and provide guidance on linking data.				
	Enhance trustworthiness, quality and value of key official statistics				
	Continuing from 2018/19: Phase 2	Public value of Statistics on Housing and Planning in the UK: Continued focus on influencing cross- government improvements to housing statistics.		UK	Systemic Review
	First half of 2019/20	Provision of statistics on Rough Sleeping by four countries of UK		England, Scotland, Wales, NI	Compliance Checks
	First half of 2019/20	Affordable Housing Provision (Welsh Government)		Wales	Compliance Check
First half of 2019/20	Housing Statistics Annual Key Trends (Scottish Government)		Scotland	Compliance Checks	

	Second half of 2019/20	Scottish Quarterly Housing Update (Scottish Government)	Scotland	Compliance Checks	
Labour Market and Welfare	In the Labour Market and Welfare domain we will focus on improved 'storytelling' to aid user understanding, for example, working with the Department for Work and Pensions to enhance coherence across its benefit statistics . In 2019/20 we will assess the trustworthiness, quality and value of the UK Labour Market statistics , and at the same time we will focus on the coherence of the related statistics across the countries of the UK through a series of compliance checks. We will encourage ONS and DWP improvements in innovation and dissemination of their statistics, building our understanding of how ONS's transformation programme and the use of administrative data sources will impact quality and value.				
	Enhance trustworthiness, quality and value of key official statistics				
	Continuing from 2018/19: Phase 2	The coherence and accessibility of statistics on Income and Earnings: Phase 2		UK	Systemic Review
	Continuing from 2018/19: Phase 2	Northern Ireland Civil Service Sickness Absence Statistics (Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA))		NI	Assessment
	First half of 2019/20	UK Labour Market Statistics (Office for National Statistics)		UK	Assessment
	Second half of 2019/20	DWP Benefits Statistical Summary (Department for Work and Pensions)		GB	Assessment
	Continuing from 2018/19	Universal Credit (Department for Work and Pensions)		GB	Compliance Check

	Continuing from 2018/19	Benefit Cap statistics (Department for Work and Pensions)	GB	Compliance Check
	Second half of 2019/20	Labour Market Statistics in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales (Scottish Government; Welsh Government; Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA))	Scotland, Wales, NI	Compliance Checks
	Second half of 2019/20	Civil Service Statistics (Cabinet Office)	UK	Compliance Check
Population	We will monitor progress of the planned integration of administrative data sources into the 2021 Census and key population statistics , and determine the implications for trustworthiness, quality and value of these developments. Our priorities for 2019/20 are the continuing assessment of the 2021 Census and our ongoing engagement with ONS and other government departments on progress to develop migration statistics.			
	Enhance trustworthiness, quality and value of key official statistics			
	Continuing from 2018/19: Phase 1	2021 Census (including administrative data sources) (Office for National Statistics, National Records of Scotland, Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency(NISRA))	UK	Assessment
	Continuing from 2018/19	Migration Statistics: As the transformation work for migration statistics develops, we will continue to monitor the progress of ONS and other government departments – including Home Office and Department of Work and Pensions – in bringing improvements to the statistics and consider whether user needs are being met.	UK	Other
Security, Defence and	Our priority for 2019/20 moves from defence statistics to aid spending statistics produced by the Department for International Development . We will also be working more broadly to understand the statistics and data landscape within this domain, and to building			

International Relations	relationships with producers of statistics, including the senior figures responsible for statistics and data in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.			
	Enhance trustworthiness, quality and value of key official statistics			
	First half of 2019/20	Statistics on International Development (Department for International Development)	UK	Compliance Check
Travel, Transport and Tourism	We want to enhance our links with users and producers of Transport, Travel and Tourism statistics and data, including in the Devolved Administrations. We will engage and convene producers and users involved in innovative work within this domain, for example: in the production of new statistics using large scale datasets and through data linkage. Our priorities for 2019/20 include assuring quality so decision making is accurately informed in times of methodological change – for example, through our compliance checks of Overseas Travel and Tourism statistics and Road Accidents and Safety statistics . Our assessment and compliance check of various government rail statistics will also reflect the increasing prominence of rail travel as a topic in recent public debates.			
	Enhance trustworthiness, quality and value of key official statistics			
	Continuing from 2018/19	National Rail Passenger Survey (Transport Focus)	GB	Assessment
	Continuing from 2018/19	Rail statistics (Office of Rail and Road)	GB	Compliance Check
	Continuing from 2018/19	Road Accidents and Safety statistics (Department for Transport)	GB	Compliance Check
	Second half of 2019/20	Accident and Safety statistics for devolved nations (Transport Scotland, Welsh Government, Department for Infrastructure (NI))	Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland	Compliance Checks

	Second half of 2019/20	Overseas Travel and Tourism (Office for National Statistics): Work will be focused later in 2019/20 following methods changes by ONS.	UK	Compliance Check
Cross-Cutting	Enhance trustworthiness, quality and value of key official statistics			
	Continuing from 2018/19	Public value of statistics on children and younger people.	UK	Systemic Review
	Continuing from 2018/19	Insight: Coherence. First in series of Insight reports focused on supporting the strategic aims of OSR.	UK	Insight Programme
	First half of 2019/20	Statistical Leadership: will look at issues around statistical leadership in official statistics producing bodies. Including influence, access to resource and decision-making powers of statistical leaders. We will engage with producers of statistics early to understand what might best support them.	UK	Systemic Review
	Advocate trustworthiness, quality and value inside and outside of Government			
	Continuing from 2018/19	Voluntary Adoption of the Code: We will continue to advocate for voluntary adoption outside the boundaries of official statistics	UK	Policy and Standards
	Identify risks to the use of statistics in public debate and respond through casework			
	First half of 2019/20	Identify statistics and data most used in public debate: working towards supplementing domain knowledge with a more automated and systematic approach to gathering information.	UK	Other
	Develop understanding of the public good in collaboration with allies and develop a framework for judging misleadingness			

	First half of 2019/20	In 2019/20 the focus of our research programme will be to understand what statistics which serve the public good look like. We will identify relevant existing research and draw together interested partner organisations.	UK	Other
	First half of 2019/20	Framework for judging misleadingness: We will form a framework to support our decision making and transparency, setting out how to judge misleadingness.	UK	Other