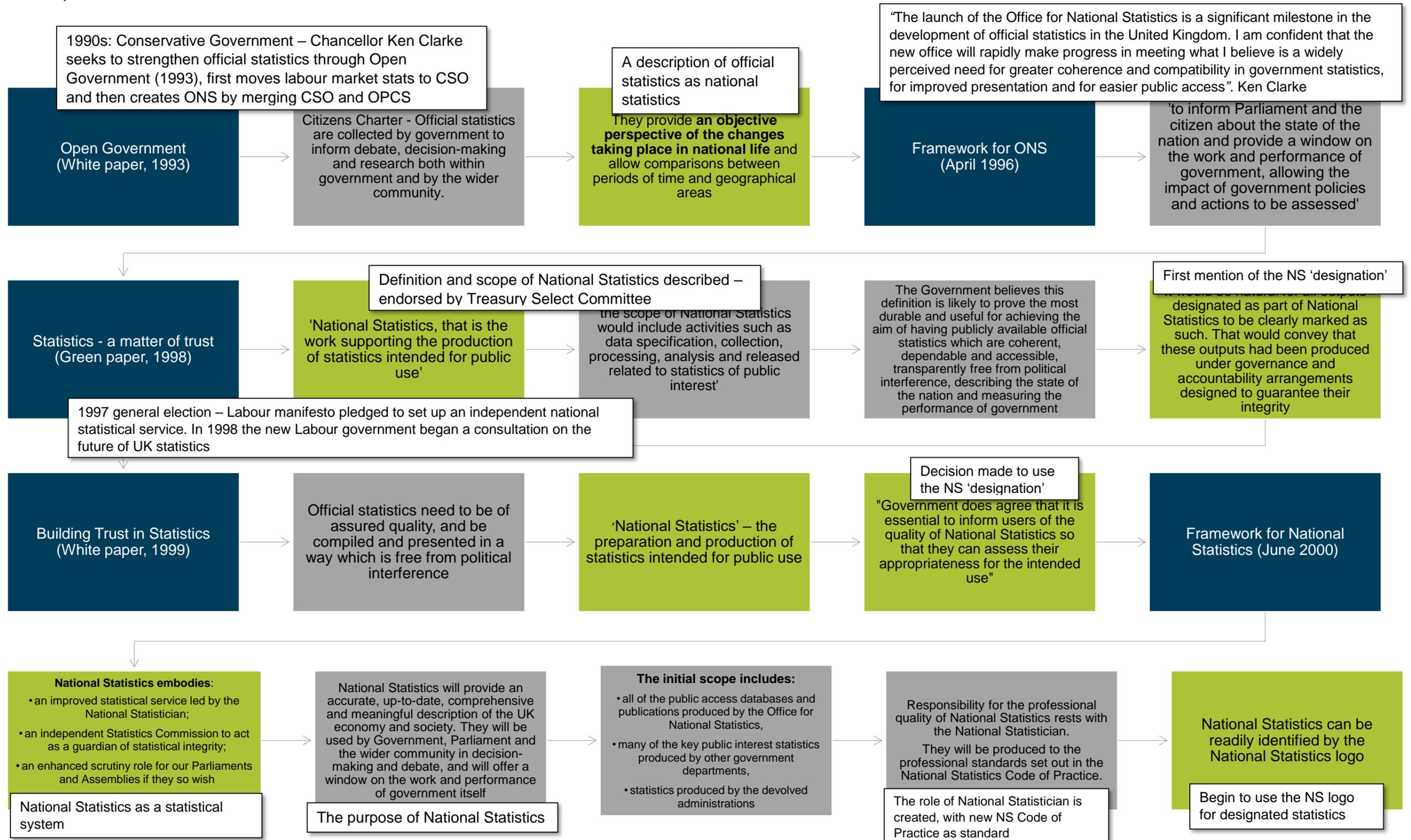


National Statistics and the designation - the 1990s to the introduction of the Framework of National Statistics in June 2000

A plain text version of the flowcharts can be found below each one.



National Statistics and the designation - the 1990s to the introduction of the Framework of National Statistics in June 2000

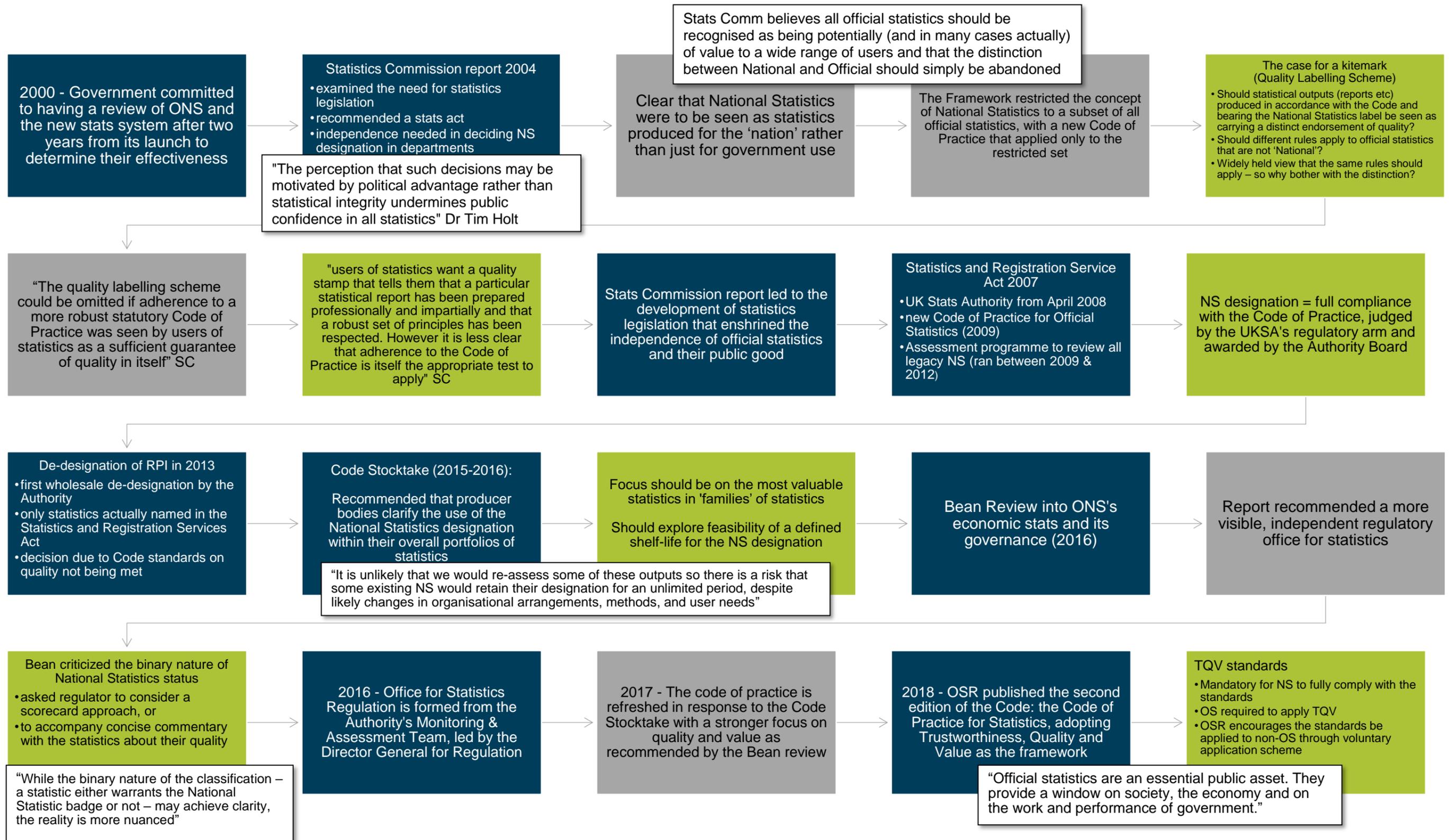
Key points

- **Open Government**
(White paper, 1993)
- Citizens Charter - Official statistics are collected by government to inform debate, decision-making and research both within government and by the wider community.
1990s: Conservative Government – Chancellor Ken Clarke seeks to strengthen official statistics through Open Government (1993), first moves labour market stats to CSO and then creates ONS by merging CSO and OPCS
- They provide **an objective perspective of the changes taking place in national life** and allow comparisons between periods of time and geographical areas
A description of official statistics as national statistics
- **Framework for ONS**
(April 1996)
- 'to inform Parliament and the citizen about the state of the nation and provide a window on the work and performance of government, allowing the impact of government policies and actions to be assessed'
"The launch of the Office for National Statistics is a significant milestone in the development of official statistics in the United Kingdom. I am confident that the new office will rapidly make progress in meeting what I believe is a widely perceived need for greater coherence and compatibility in government statistics, for improved presentation and for easier public access". Ken Clarke
- **Statistics - a matter of trust**
(Green paper, 1998)
1997 general election – Labour manifesto pledged to set up an independent national statistical service. In 1998 the new Labour government began a consultation on the future of UK statistics
- 'National Statistics, that is the work supporting the production of statistics intended for public use'
Definition and scope of National Statistics described – endorsed by Treasury Select Committee
- 'the scope of National Statistics would include activities such as data specification, collection, processing, analysis and released related to statistics of public interest'
- The Government believes this definition is likely to prove the most durable and useful for achieving the aim of having publicly available official statistics which are coherent, dependable and accessible, transparently free from political interference, describing the state of the nation and measuring the performance of government
- It would be natural for all outputs designated as part of National Statistics to be clearly marked as such. That would convey that these outputs had been produced under governance and accountability arrangements designed to guarantee their integrity
First mention of the NS 'designation'

Timeline: National Statistics and the designation in the 2000s

- **Building Trust in Statistics**
(White paper, 1999)
- Official statistics need to be of assured quality, and be compiled and presented in a way which is free from political interference
- 'National Statistics' – the preparation and production of statistics intended for public use
- "Government does agree that it is essential to inform users of the quality of National Statistics so that they can assess their appropriateness for the intended use"
Decision made to use the NS 'designation'
- Framework for National Statistics (June 2000)
- **National Statistics as a statistical system embodies:**
an improved statistical service led by the National Statistician;
an independent Statistics Commission to act as a guardian of statistical integrity;
an enhanced scrutiny role for our Parliaments and Assemblies if they so wish
- National Statistics will provide an accurate, up-to-date, comprehensive and meaningful description of the UK economy and society. They will be used by Government, Parliament and the wider community in decision-making and debate, and will offer a window on the work and performance of government itself
The purpose of National Statistics
- **The initial scope includes:**
all of the public access databases and publications produced by the Office for National Statistics,
many of the key public interest statistics produced by other government departments,
statistics produced by the devolved administrations
- Responsibility for the professional quality of National Statistics rests with the National Statistician.
- They will be produced to the professional standards set out in the National Statistics Code of Practice.
The role of National Statistician is created, with new NS Code of Practice as standard
- National Statistics can be readily identified by the National Statistics logo
Begin to use the NS logo for designated statistics

Timeline: National Statistics and the designation – 2000s to 2020



Timeline: National Statistics and the designation in the 2000s

- 2000 - Government committed to having a review of ONS and the new stats system after two years from its launch to determine their effectiveness

- [Statistics Commission report 2004](#)

examined the need for statistics legislation

recommended a stats act

independence needed in deciding NS designation in departments

- "The perception that such decisions may be motivated by political advantage rather than statistical integrity undermines public confidence in all statistics" Dr Tim Holt

- Clear that National Statistics were to be seen as statistics produced for the 'nation' rather than just for government use

- The Framework restricted the concept of National Statistics to a subset of all official statistics, with a new Code of Practice that applied only to the restricted set

- Stats Comm believes all official statistics should be recognised as being potentially (and in many cases actually) of value to a wide range of users and that the distinction between National and Official should simply be abandoned

- [The case for a kitemark](#)
(Quality Labelling Scheme)

Should statistical outputs (reports etc) produced in accordance with the Code and bearing the National Statistics label be seen as carrying a distinct endorsement of quality?

Should different rules apply to official statistics that are not 'National'?

Widely held view that the same rules should apply – so why bother with the distinction?

- "The quality labelling scheme could be omitted if adherence to a more robust statutory Code of Practice was seen by users of statistics as a sufficient guarantee of quality in itself" SC
- "users of statistics want a quality stamp that tells them that a particular statistical report has been prepared professionally and impartially and that a robust set of principles has been respected. However it is less clear that adherence to the Code of Practice is itself the appropriate test to apply" SC
- Stats Commission report led to the development of statistics legislation that enshrined the independence of official statistics and their public good

- [Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007](#)

UK Stats Authority from April 2008

new Code of Practice for Official Statistics (2009)

Assessment programme to review all legacy NS (ran between 2009 & 2012)

Timeline: National Statistics and the designation in the 2000s

- NS designation = full compliance with the Code of Practice, judged by the UKSA's regulatory arm and awarded by the Authority Board

- [De-designation of RPI in 2013](#)

first wholesale de-designation by the Authority

only statistics actually named in the Statistics and Registration Services Act

decision due to Code standards on quality not being met

- [Code Stocktake \(2015-2016\)](#):

Recommended that producer bodies clarify the use of the National Statistics designation within their overall portfolios of statistics

- Focus should be on the most valuable statistics in 'families' of statistics

“It is unlikely that we would re-assess some of these outputs so there is a risk that some existing NS would retain their designation for an unlimited period, despite likely changes in organisational arrangements, methods, and user needs”

- Should explore feasibility of a defined shelf-life for the NS designation

- [Bean Review into ONS's economic stats and its governance \(2016\)](#)

Report recommended a more visible, independent regulatory office for statistics

- “While the binary nature of the classification – a statistic either warrants the National Statistic badge or not – may achieve clarity, the reality is more nuanced”

- Bean criticized the binary nature of National Statistics status

asked regulator to consider a scorecard approach, or

to accompany concise commentary with the statistics about their quality

- [2016 - Office for Statistics Regulation](#) is formed from the Authority's Monitoring & Assessment Team, led by the Director General for Regulation
- [2017 - The Code of Practice](#) is refreshed in response to the Code Stocktake with a stronger focus on quality and value as recommended by the Bean review
- [2018 - OSR published the second edition of the Code](#):
- The Code of Practice for Statistics, adopting Trustworthiness, Quality and Value as the framework

“Official statistics are an essential public asset. They provide a window on society, the economy and on the work and performance of government.”

- [TQV standards](#)

Mandatory for NS to fully comply with the standards

OS required to apply TQV

OSR encourages the standards be applied to non-OS through voluntary application scheme