F. Draft Guidance: Guidance on Accountability

Illustrative example to inform Consultation question 5

We are developing Code guidance and plan to test materials with our stakeholders.

This draft guidance on accountability set out a framework that we expect official statistics producers to adopt and encourage all producers of statistics to also apply. The framework emphasises the importance of producers making themselves accountable to their users.

Guidance on Accountability

This guidance outlines a model for public accountability that we expect official statistics producers to apply and encourage any producers that publish statistics to adopt.

Official statistics

Official statistics producers are accountable to the public for how well their statistics serve the public good.

Public accountability requires demonstration of how the Standards for Official Statistics are achieved, based on evidence of practice and an openness to listen and act on feedback.

To enable public accountability, we expect official statistics producers to:

Give an account by providing information with the data and statistics about the sources and methods used, the reasons for their selection, their strengths and limitations, and quality measures such as of accuracy and reliability

Be held to account by providing the means for users to engage meaningfully in open and constructive ways with the producers, when questions can be asked and responses given

Make good by improving the statistics or their production if and where needed and responding appropriately to the feedback

In deciding whether to use official statistics, we recommend that users carefully review the material shared by official statistics producers about the statistics to decide whether the statistics meet the user's specific need.

We encourage users to work with statistics producers to assist in developing new official statistics and improving existing official statistics by giving feedback when requested and participating in opportunities to test official statistics in development.

Users and other members of the public can also flag any concerns about official statistics by contacting the producer teams.

The Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) considers evidence of how official statistics producers meet the standards of Trustworthiness, Quality and Value in the Code of Practice for Statistics. Where we find the standards have been met, we confirm the status of 'accredited official statistics' (called National Statistics in the [Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007](#)). Our compliance reviews are published on our [website](#).

Other statistics

We encourage all producers publishing statistics to be open about how they ensure their statistics are delivered to professional standards.

All statistics producers that have [voluntarily committed](#) to applying the **Guiding Principles from the Code** should demonstrate to their users how they show the standards of Trustworthiness, Quality and Value in a statement of compliance. The producers should regularly review their statements to ensure they reflect the actions and improvements undertaken for the statistics.

Questions for producers to consider in applying this guidance

Quality questions

1. What is the need for these statistics?
2. How well do the data match the concept you wish to measure?
3. What are the levels of response, completeness, duplication and known sources of error?
4. What are the limitations of your statistics?
5. How will the limitations affect the quality and use of the outputs?

User engagement questions

1. How do you know what users think about the statistics?
2. Are they satisfied or unsatisfied with the quality of the statistics?
3. What changes would users like to see in the statistics?
4. In what ways have you been able to address users' needs?
5. How have you fed back to users on what improvements you have/haven't made?

Other resources

Further questions about quality are available in [quality questions and red flags](#) on GitHub.

OSR guides:

- [Thinking about quality when producing statistics](#)
- [Guidance on user engagement](#)
- [Guidance on voluntarily applying the Code](#)

Code of Practice for Statistics:

- Understanding the Code and how it supports the public good
- Guiding Principles from the Code
- Standards for Official Statistics
- Standards for Intelligent Transparency