

Standard 5: prioritise quality

Standard 5 of the [Standards for Official Statistics](#) in the Code of Practice for Statistics recognises that the organisational structure, the way it is run, and its quality culture, can impact the statistical producer's ability to produce statistics that are of suitable quality.

The Standard encourages people working in organisations producing official statistics to be open about their commitment to quality. This means actively promoting appropriate quality standards and values, reflecting the organisation's approach to quality management. It is not a responsibility for leaders alone – everyone has a part to play.

A good quality culture relies on learning from what works, as well as what doesn't, and transparency in sharing the lessons and actions. It encourages honesty and openness to learn from errors and near misses to strengthen producers' systems.

The Standard:

5. Producers must support a quality culture that promotes good practice and encourages learning and improvement, under the direction of the Chief Statistician/Head of Profession for Statistics

so that the public can have confidence that published statistics are produced by organisations that continuously improve quality standards

- 5.1. Promote and apply appropriate quality standards, taking account of how quality can change
- 5.2. Provide a supportive environment to enable staff to propose improvements in ways of working and raise quality concerns
- 5.3. Promote the sharing of good practice and examples of effective quality management. Learn from both mistakes and good practice and conduct timely reviews of quality concerns
- 5.4. Work collaboratively with data supply partners, other producers, topic experts, and other partners, to develop a common understanding of quality matters. Welcome and seek their input on ways to improve quality
- 5.5. Periodically review the effectiveness of your processes and quality management approach and be open about findings and planned improvements
- 5.6. Keep up to date with possible ways to improve the statistics. Innovate where possible to keep statistics relevant and useful. Collaborate across professions and organisations where appropriate

- 5.7. Assess the added value of potential improvements to methods and consider the impact on the statistics, including in relation to comparability and coherence
- 5.8. Publish your quality management approach and explain how it aligns with your organisation's commitment to data quality

Questions to consider:

1. **Open approach:** How does your organisation explain its quality management approach to users and is the explanation kept updated? How do you reassure users about the quality management approach for your statistics?
2. **Application:** How do you ensure that you work in line with your organisation's quality management approach? Are staff confident about sharing their concerns about quality with managers? How do you ensure that the quality is proportionate to how your statistics are used?
3. **Relationships:** How do you work with data supply partners, other producers, topic experts, and other partners to develop a common understanding of quality matters? How do others in your organisation approach this, and what can you learn from their approach?
4. **Learning:** What is your approach to learning from, and addressing, quality issues? How do you ensure the lessons are shared with others?
5. **Innovation:** How are you seeking to innovate the way you produce statistics? How do you find out about new opportunities for improving the way you work? How are you able to test and implement new approaches?

Related guidance:

Office for Statistics Regulation:

- [Thinking about quality when producing statistics](#)
- Guidance on leadership: achieving better outcomes (coming soon)
- [Comparability framework tool](#)
- [Statistical Practice Capability Framework](#)
- [Quality and statistics: an OSR perspective](#)
- [Spotlight on Quality Framework: Assuring Confidence in Economic Statistics](#)

Government Statistical Service (GSS):

- [Government Data Quality Framework](#)
- [GSS Quality Strategy](#)
- [Quality statistics in government](#)
- [Advice for policy professionals using statistics and analysis](#)

SHORT GUIDE SERIES

Government Digital Service (GDS):

- [AI Playbook for the UK Government](#)

National Audit Office:

- [Improving government data: A guide for senior leaders](#)

European Statistical System:

- [Quality assurance framework](#)

UNECE:

- [Generic Statistical Business Process Model](#)
- [Maturity Model on Quality Culture in Official Statistics](#)

Good practice examples:

Quality culture

- Blog – Office for National Statistics: [Culture, psychological safety, and the impact on quality](#)
- Blog – GSS Data Quality Hub: [Five signs of a good data quality culture](#)
- Home Office: [Developing a data quality culture within policing organisations](#)
- Cabinet Office: [Establishing a data quality culture through Canvass Reform](#)
- Blog – OSR: [Good statistics are never done: why producers should never stop improving their statistics](#)
- Blog – Office for Environmental Protection: [Embracing Challenge for Change](#)
- UNECE: [Generative AI and Official Statistics Workshop 2025](#)
- Blog – OSR: [Our current position on regulating, responding to and using AI](#)

Quality strategies

- Government Statistical Service: [GSS Quality Strategy case studies](#)
- GSS Blog: [People-first approach: developing the data strategy for the Office of Rail and Road \(ORR\)](#)
- NHS Digital, including selecting quality indicators: [Developing the Data Quality Maturity Index](#)
- Case study – HMRC: [Using independent reviews to inform assurances around quality](#)
- Blog – Scottish Government: [Ensuring that analytical leadership is fit for the future](#)
- Blog – ADR UK: [Achieving linked data insights to improve lives: a leadership perspective](#)
- Blog – Government Data Quality Hub: [Getting the ingredients right for quality analysis](#)
- Blog – UK Health Security Agency: [Producing, reviewing, and always evolving: UKHSA statistics](#)

Code of Practice for Statistics:

- [Understanding TQV](#)
- [The Code Principles](#)
- [Standards for Official Statistics](#)
- [Standards for the Public Use of Statistics, Data and Wider Analysis](#)
- [Code Guidance](#) – other short guides supporting use of the Code
- [Required policies and statements relating to official statistics production](#)