

# How we will strengthen trust and confidence in statistics 2026–2029

December 2025

## Summary

The next three years represent a watershed time for the UK statistical system. Demand for timely, trustworthy and high-quality statistics has never been greater, while public confidence in official figures, and in public institutions more generally, faces clear threats.

Statistics should serve everyone, helping enhance knowledge about every section of society and the economy, and people's place within them. However, they must do so in today's challenging environment, where fears about misinformation prosper. Moreover, after a challenging period, the UK's biggest producer of statistics, the Office for National Statistics (ONS), is focusing on implementing a recovery plan in the face of ongoing issues with the quality of some of its economic statistics.

In this climate, the need for a credible and rigorous Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) is not just significant – it is essential. As the UK's statistics regulator, we help ensure that statistics serve the public good as public assets that provide insights to, and shape actions by, a wide range of users in society (not just government).

OSR's response must therefore be confident and firm: we will provide assurance to users and the public on the Trustworthiness, Quality and Value of public statistics; and we will continue to defend and promote the role of statistics in this environment.

Our 2026-29 strategy sets out, with clarity and candour, how OSR will rise to this challenge, regulating fairly but firmly to restore confidence, drive systemic improvement and defend the public good. The new Code of Practice represents a significant opportunity to support confidence in public statistics. The new Code is clearer, more direct, more user-focused and more supportive of analysts.

## Strategic Themes Overview

For 2026–2029, OSR will focus on four strategic themes:

1. Credible and Rigorous Regulator
2. System Catalyst
3. Public Use of Statistics
4. Enhance Our Own Trustworthiness, Quality and Value

### Theme 1: Credible and Rigorous Regulator

We want to continue to be a credible and rigorous regulator. By “rigorous”, we mean that we will form robust, clear and well-communicated judgements on compliance with the Code. We commit to:

- deliver timely, evidence-based reviews of compliance with the Code

- work with statistical producers to identify key statistics that we have not reviewed in some time
- set and enforce clear deadlines for producers to take any necessary actions
- strengthen transparency by following up and reporting publicly on progress against our requirement

## **Theme 2: System Catalyst**

Across the UK's statistical system, there are significant systemic opportunities and risks. As a catalyst, we will continue our supportive approach to engaging with producers, and through this, set the agenda for system-wide improvement, demanding openness, responsiveness and innovation. We commit to:

- monitor and share good practices, and support producers to make improvements rapidly when risks are systemic
- advocate and support adherence to the Code, making it the backbone of good statistical production
- encourage curiosity and adaptability to counter rigidity and complacency
- support innovation and the adoption of new tools, data sources and methods, including AI, through practical, direct guidance

## **Theme 3: Public Use of Statistics**

OSR will continue to be visible in defending the appropriate use of statistics in public debate. We will reinforce expectations of good information use and intervene firmly in cases of misleading or inappropriate use of statistics. OSR's voice will be clear: statistics must serve the public good. We commit to:

- promote the [Standards for the Public Use of Statistics, Data and Wider Analysis](#) as universal expectations for publicly communicating statistics
- continue to intervene decisively statistics are misused or misleading and respond to concerns raised with us empathetically
- build strategic partnerships with organisations that support the transparency and integrity evidence, analysis and science
- conduct research and publish findings on how statistics serve the public good
- advocate for intelligent transparency across government and public discourse

## **Theme 4: Enhance Our Own Trustworthiness, Quality and Value**

OSR must exemplify the standards that we demand of others. We will demonstrate leadership, transparency and accountability internally, maintaining our independence and strengthening our capability and processes. We will be open about our own areas for improvement and firm in strengthening them. Our outputs will be tailored, accessible and visible, and we will use feedback to measure and enhance our impact. We will not just hold

others to account; we will be accountable ourselves, setting a public example of Trustworthiness, Quality and Value. We commit to:

- embed independence, transparency and integrity across all our operations
- invest in staff capability and foster a culture of continuous quality improvement
- improve the accessibility and clarity of outputs for all audiences
- strengthen our processes through peer review, external challenge and feedback loops
- deliver training and maintain a central catalogue of guidance and learning materials
- report publicly on our impact and progress

# OSR strategic themes 2026–29

## Our environment

OSR operates in an environment of changing demand for statistics; significant challenges for ONS, the UK's largest statistics producer; and declining public trust in official institutions. Each of these elements, and what they mean for our work, is explored below.

### The UK's statistical system

- Demand for official statistics in the UK continues to grow, reflecting a strong need for timely, high-quality data across government, industry and the public. These demands come in the context of the emergence of new data sources and new tools, including AI models. Statistics producers are increasingly seeking to balance the demand for new high-quality statistics that provide insights with funding constraints, and are undertaking prioritisation exercises to review the volume of their outputs.
- Furthermore, all four governments in the UK have maintained an interest in using data and statistics. But there are questions around the extent to which they use data in an appropriate and transparent way.
- Statistics and data produced by government departments on issues such as health, education, crime and immigration are likely to feature prominently in political debate, including in elections in Wales and Scotland in 2026.
- There is continued interest in the use of administrative data to support policy decisions, and ongoing frustration at the pace and effectiveness of data sharing.
- There is also a growing interest in new ways of presenting statistics to support decision-making and public understanding, including dashboards, but the extent to which these new approaches serve the public good is unclear.

### ONS

- There are issues with the quality of some official statistics produced by ONS, particularly in areas of economic statistics, and there has been a decline in user confidence in ONS's ability to deliver these statistics effectively.
- In response to these concerns, and following the Devereux review, ONS has implemented a strategy to improve its economic statistics and also improve its internal culture.
- ONS also needs to recognise its role as the UK's national statistical institute, leading on data access, methods and professional development.
- The role of the National Statistician is currently changing, with the role being separated from the role of the ONS's Chief Executive Officer, although it is unclear whether this separation will be temporary or permanent.

### Public debate

- Public concern regarding the reliability of information continues to grow, influenced by the increasing visibility of misinformation and the impact of emerging technologies, including AI. The fragmentation of the public sphere is accelerating, with more individuals accessing news and engaging in debate through diverse social media channels rather than traditional platforms. There is also a prevailing sense that public trust in official institutions is diminishing.

## OSR's crucial role

This strategic environment means that OSR's core role remains crucial. Our vision remains that statistics should serve the public good. This vision is as important as ever.

In delivering this mission, our role is to:

- provide assurance on the Trustworthiness, Quality and Value of statistics. We must ensure that our judgements are clear and highlight strengths and limitations directly and honestly
- support and guide the statistical system
- stand up for the appropriate use of statistics in the public domain. While we recognise that we cannot address all aspects of declining public trust, we can form partnerships with other organisations, playing our part to protect integrity of evidence

## Our strategic themes 2026–29

The Code of Practice for Statistics will remain at the heart of our work. The Code encompasses the standards of Trustworthiness, Quality, and Value, providing a foundation for ethical and transparent statistics and guiding producers and users across the system.

Our strategic themes focus on how we will mobilise the Code to support the public good in the current environment.

We are committed to developing an evaluation plan to track our progress against these themes, and to gather evidence on our impact and outcomes.

## 1. Credible and rigorous regulator

1. We will be a **credible and rigorous regulator**, making clear and strongly communicated judgements against the Code and ensuring that statistics producers implement our requirements.

**Impact:** Users will understand the strengths and limitations of statistics, producers will be open and focus on improvement.

### How we will be a more credible and rigorous regulator

We will hold ourselves to the highest standards of quality and integrity.

- Credibility is the cornerstone of our strategy. It is earned through the clarity, consistency, and the independence of our regulatory judgements. By basing our recommendations on well-presented and fair evidence, we build trust in our team and among our stakeholders. We work in partnership to enhance our impact and credibility. Transparent communication supports our credibility.
- Rigour is central to our approach, embodying robust analysis and a commitment to high standards. We operate in a proportionate way, so rigour does not mean addressing every possible issue, but rather prioritising what matters most, ensuring that our standards are consistently maintained and that our actions reflect our dedication to the public good.

Our core role is to make sound, effective judgements about the TQV of statistics. Being credible and rigorous is about having robust processes to deliver these judgements consistently and communicate them clearly.

We need to implement proportionate approaches, allowing for both in-depth and lighter-touch reviews, while maintaining high standards. We are a small organisation working with limited resources. So, we will work with statistical producers to identify, of those statistics that we have not reviewed for some time, which are the highest priority. We will develop a new prioritisation tool to support this approach. And we will explore whether a greater degree of self-assessment might enhance the TQV of official statistics.

Peer review (often internal rather than external) and the use of external expertise when needed are valuable tools to test the rigour of our work and demonstrate the openness to improvement that we expect from official statistics producers. This also means we need to update and develop our internal guidance, templates and training.

We need to improve the communication of our judgements. This includes adopting clearer templates, making our reports easier to navigate, and tailoring communications to different audiences. Enhancing transparency by explaining decision-making processes, publishing

follow-ups and clarifying priorities is essential, though it must be balanced with discretion in sensitive contexts.

Finally, we need to demonstrate our impact more clearly – through visible outcomes, routine publication and follow-up. This in turn will strengthen OSR's reputation and influence. While our work is often rigorous and influential, much of its success happens behind the scenes, making it difficult to publicly demonstrate value. This lack of visibility may risk undermining credibility, even when interventions lead to meaningful improvements.

## Securing change

We secure change by:

- promoting the Code of Practice for Statistics and upholding it by enforcing clear, proportionate regulatory judgements with transparent follow-up mechanisms
- developing constructive relationships with users and producers of statistics
- strengthening internal quality assurance through peer review, internal review and external challenge
- improving the accessibility and clarity of outputs to support public understanding and trust
- tailoring communications with different audiences to maximise influence and engagement

## Commitments

We will:

- deliver timely, evidence-based assessments and compliance reviews against the Code of Practice
- work with producers to reduce the risk of backlog of unreviewed accredited official statistics through our refreshed approach to prioritisation
- make clear judgements, and ensure our published outputs have clear, balanced findings and requirements
- set clear timeframes within which producers should deliver requirements or report publicly on actions and progress
- develop an impact and evaluation plan



## 2. System catalyst

2. We will be a **system catalyst**, identifying key cross-cutting issues to drive improvement, ensuring statistics meet user needs in a resource-constrained world.

**Impact:** The risks and opportunities facing the system will be clearer to users and producers, and we will support positive change across the system

### How we will be a system catalyst

As well as being a regulatory body that makes formal judgements of compliance, we are also **catalysts**, providing insight to support, influence and guide. By raising systemic issues, monitoring and sharing best practice, and drawing attention to emerging innovations and emerging risks, we support improvement.

This system catalyst role emerges not through our direct regulatory judgements, but through our broader work to support the system – highlighting good practice as well as risks, and supporting a culture of openness and learning – and indeed vulnerability. We will continue to be level-headed: highlighting concrete changes that producers must make, and supporting producers to implement them. And we will recognise that openness and vulnerability only thrive where there is a sense of safety – that producers do not feel that by being open they will be subject to excessive regulatory criticism. Through our supportive yet challenging approach, we will catalyse an open culture across the statistical system.

We have two major pieces of work that provide this support: the Code of Practice, and our annual State of the System (SOSS) report. We would like to see **greater adherence to the Code** within the statistical system, and we also want to identify both **risks and good practice through the SOSS**.

We also undertake a wide range of formal and informal support activities, both in bilateral engagement with producers (for example, providing insight on the new Code) and for the whole system, for which we provide insight on emerging issues (for example, the dashboard guidance, data sharing and linkage or intelligent transparency).

The new National Statistician role, which is more explicitly focused on the statistics system, will be a significant partner for this aspect of our work. But we will also keep under review how ONS is fulfilling its role as the national statistical institute of the UK – providing data services, professional development and methodological support across the system.

Our scope in undertaking the role of catalyst is the UK's system for the production of official statistics, which is made up of official statistics producers. While many of our insights are important and valuable for other forms of analytical output (forecasts, models), we do not formally provide assurance on the TQV of these outputs. We do, however, require government bodies to comply with the principles of intelligent transparency when

publicly presenting the findings of any kind of analytical output. And we encourage voluntary adoption of the Code for other kinds of analysis – but without committing to any compliance-based reviews.

In short, we are catalysts, because:

- we use our role and insight to support, influence and guide
- we collaborate with producers across the system to influence systemic improvement.

Within this strategic theme there are three areas of focus:

- Encourage the statistical system to **engage openly**. We would like to see more effective engagement between producers and users of statistics, as well as the wider public – this could be important to protect survey responses, and to understand what people are happy to have done with their data. One of the key lessons of the challenges faced by ONS has been its weakness and defensiveness in responding to external challenge. We will advocate to all producers the importance not just of user engagement on plans, but also an ongoing engagement as users react to, comment on and challenge statistical outputs.
- Emphasise the importance of **curiosity**. There is a risk that the statistical system has a degree of rigidity – valuing the time series and the consistent production process over adaptation and responding to new issues. These issues often emerge when new data sources imply that the official statistics are telling an incomplete or misleading story. Through our system-wide guidance, our blogs and our informal networking, we will emphasise the importance of responding to these emerging issues with curiosity, and promote curiosity as an essential part of a quality culture, supporting continuous improvement. And we will explore the potential for producers to make greater use of non-traditional data sources (data that are neither commissioned surveys nor government administrative data).
- Identify opportunities for the system to **improve and innovate**. Our cross-cutting work – for example, that on data sharing and linkage – supports innovative approaches and helps producers think through how to apply the principles of the Code in new contexts. As part of maintaining of focus quality, we will identify **risks** and provide guidance on how to deal with them. The risks to statistical production include trustworthiness risks (such as pressures on producers from resource constraints), quality risks (such as reduced representativeness of survey data, communication of quality and uncertainty), and value risks (how producers can communicate statistics appropriately in a crowded information landscape). Increasingly over the 3-year period of this strategy, producers will introduce AI approaches into statistical production and dissemination, and we will support them through guidance on how to do this in line with the Code.

## Securing change

We secure change by:

- monitoring and sharing good practice
- identifying and communicating systemic risks and opportunities across the statistical system
- promoting innovation and responsiveness through guidance, blogs and convening activities
- encouraging open engagement between producers, users and the public to strengthen relevance
- supporting innovation and adoption of new tools and methods, including AI, through practical guidance
- championing curiosity and adaptability as core elements of a quality culture

## Commitments

We will:

- publish an annual State of the Statistical System report with actionable insights and recommendations for the National Statistician
- disseminate and embed the updated Code of Practice across the system
- develop targeted guidance on emerging issues (such as dashboards, AI, public engagement)
- monitor the uptake of guidance and track system-wide improvements

### 3. Public Use of Statistics

3. We will champion **Public Use of Statistics**, standing up for the appropriate use of statistics in the public domain – stepping in where we have concerns, and forming partnerships with key actors who support the integrity of evidence more broadly.

**Impact:** Statistics will be used transparently in a way that is intelligible to users – that is, in line with our principle of intelligent transparency. And we will work with a range of other bodies to address broader issues of public use of evidence.

#### How we will champion the public use of statistics

Although our core remit is official statistics, we recognise that official statistics are part of this much broader landscape of analytical evidence.

By analytical evidence we mean evidence that emerges from the work of analysts inside and outside government. This includes official statistics; research; evaluation; modelling and forecasting; and scientific outputs. We recognise that official statistics are part of this much broader landscape of analytical evidence.

It is clear that the environment in which analytical evidence is used in public life is strained. Citizens get their information from a wide range of sources; some may be moving away from traditional media, and there is a greater risk that algorithmically curated information reinforces misinformation. It is possible that AI-driven content might further increase this risk. So, it is important that key institutions responsible for data, analysis and scientific evidence continue to uphold the importance of sound, trustworthy information – in short, argue for the public good provided by appropriately used **analytical evidence**.

OSR is only one. OSR cannot take responsibility for addressing the entire challenge, when others are both better resourced and more clearly empowered to act (for example, Ofcom taking on responsibility for online safety through the Online Safety Act) or experts in particular sectors (like the Committee on Research Integrity). These actors include groups within government, including the Analytical Function and the Government Communications Services.

On the other hand, we should recognise that we do play an important role when it comes to the use of analytical evidence in public life – that, though small, we are a crucial part of the information ecosystem.

The particular role we can play involves:

- Reinforcing norms of good information use rooted in our Code, which, while focused on official statistics, has much wider relevance. We are already doing this in a

decisive way with the new Standards for the Public Use of Statistics, Data and Wider Analysis, based in our concept of intelligent transparency.

- Promoting voluntary application of the Code among organisations working with data outside of official statistics production. The Code can support any organisation and analyst working with data, statistics and analysis, whether inside government or beyond, to produce analytical outputs that are trustworthy, high-quality and useful for supporting decisions.
- Continuing to take on cases which members of the public, organisations, the media and political parties raise with us. These cases enable us to address specific issues; to further reinforce the principles of good practice around intelligent transparency and minimising misleadingness; and to show our own openness to a wide range of perspectives and voices.
- Being clear that we are not a fact-checker. Our unique contribution is to ensure that statistics are used in a way that does not undermine public confidence in them. In doing this, we follow our interventions policy, which sets out how we decide which cases to take on and how we should intervene.
- Conducting research from our unique perspective to improve understanding of how statistics serve the public good and use this understanding to shape improvements in statistical production and communication. We will also embed the findings of that research in our regulatory approach. As with casework, this research serves our goals in multiple ways: it enables us to identify specific insights (for example related to the use of statistics by decision makers); it establishes a norm of the importance of drawing on research into the public good; and it demonstrates our own openness and curiosity.
- Develop our partnerships with other actors who play key roles in supporting public confidence in analytical evidence. For instance, we have crucial partnerships with the Royal Statistical Society (RSS), BBC Verify, Sense about Science, the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA), Committee on Research Integrity, and House of Commons Library.
- Exploring, with the National Statistician, how far OSR may have a role in supporting citizens and communities to feel more empowered to contribute to the development of statistics, in line with the Code's Value principle.
- Developing a stronger voice in wider government communities, including the analytical function, the communication profession and the data/digital community, highlighting the positive role that TQV can play in supporting the appropriate use of analytical evidence within government, and continuing our advocacy of data linkage.

## Securing change

We secure change by:

- promoting the Standards for the Public Use of Statistics, Data and Wider Analysis as the norm for communicating analytical evidence
- clearly intervening in cases of misleading or inappropriate use of statistics and always showing empathy to the people who raise concerns

- building strategic partnerships to amplify norms of transparency and integrity, both within government (including the Government Communications Service) and outside it
- conducting and publishing research to deepen understanding of how statistics can serve the public good
- advocating for intelligent transparency across government and public discourse
- supporting those who voluntarily adopt the Code of Practice

## Commitments

We will:

- continue to deliver responsive and impactful casework
- keep our interventions policy under constant review
- embed findings from public good research into regulatory practice
- continue to develop partnerships with key actors (for example, RSS, BBC Verify, ASA, House of Commons Library)
- support and embed intelligent transparency, including exploring the use of report cards
- strengthen OSR's voice in government analytical and communication communities
- continue to promote the Code and intelligent transparency

## 4. Enhance our own TQV

As a regulator, OSR must exemplify the standards that we expect of others. Focusing on our own TQV not only shows us practicing what we preach but also provides a framework to underpin our own organisational ambition. It includes maintaining our independence and separation from producers of statistics (T); enhancing our capability, processes and quality culture (Q); and increasing the effectiveness of our public engagement and how we measure and enhance our impact (V).

Enhancing our own TQV is a strategic priority. It ensures that we remain a credible, capable and responsive regulator – one that not only holds others to account but also is also accountable to other. By embedding TQV in our culture and operations, we strengthen our ability to deliver meaningful change and uphold the role of statistics in public life.

**Trustworthiness (T)** is foundational to our role as a regulator. To safeguard it, we must remain vigilant and be proactive in how we operate, communicate and engage. Trustworthiness begins with independence: our formal and substantive separation from statistics producers is essential to our role. We will continue to reinforce this through clear boundaries, transparent decision-making and policies that manage any potential conflicts of interest. But trustworthiness goes beyond independence – it includes transparency, impartiality and integrity in how we operate, communicate and engage and a self-reflective and open culture. We will continue to embed our values through training and role modelling, helping our team understand the importance of independence and how to establish relationships with statistics producers that balance collaboration and scrutiny. Peer review, internal review and external experts will be used to test and challenge our thinking and reinforce our credibility. We will remain alert to external risks and adapt where necessary to protect public confidence in statistics and evidence. We will be transparent in our communications and decision-making ensuring our judgements are clear and that we are publicly accountable for our views.

**Quality (Q)** is about capability, consistency and thoughtful judgement. We will invest in staff development, ensuring that our team is equipped to tackle the complexity of our work. We will identify, promote and learn from good practice and enhance the processes that underpin our regulatory process ensuring they are well documented and set clear expectations. This will include more use of internal peer review of our judgements and embedding feedback loops from producers and users on the usefulness and impact of our work. We will continue to promote high standards and evidence-based reasoning and ensure that our quality culture is embedded across the organisation – not just reliant on individual leadership but supported by consistent frameworks and practices.

**Value (V)** means demonstrating impact and engaging effectively. We will clarify our value proposition for different audiences – including producers, policymakers and the public – using the pillars of the Code to frame our messaging. We will broaden our engagement,

reaching beyond traditional stakeholders to include underrepresented groups and the wider public. Our outputs will be tailored to audience needs and made more accessible and user-friendly, and we will improve our digital presence to enhance visibility. We will use feedback more directly in developing measures of our impact.

## Securing change

We secure change by:

- embedding our values of independence, transparency and integrity across all aspects of our work
- investing in staff capability and fostering a consistent quality culture
- improving the accessibility and clarity of outputs to support diverse audiences
- using peer review, external challenge and feedback loops to strengthen processes
- tailoring engagement strategies to maximise our impact

## Commitments

We will:

- deliver training on impartiality, independence and quality standards
- maintain a central catalogue of guidance, templates and learning materials
- introduce tools to measure and publicly report our impact
- improve our digital presence and the accessibility of outputs
- introduce a live register of recommendations to track progress and demonstrate follow-through



## OSR's operating model

### Users

Our work starts with users: we consider user needs for statistics, and user concerns about how statistics are being produced and used. This user perspective:

- drives our priorities, including understanding the most important statistics from a user perspective, which we focus on in our core regulatory work
- forms the core input into our casework function through the concerns raised with us
- provides the most important evidence base for our assessments and reviews

Our main mechanisms for user evidence are:

- bilateral engagement with key users, undertaken by our domain leads and senior leadership team
- requests for user input into our assessments
- The Raise a Concern section of our website (and our casework function more generally)
- monitoring of media and social media
- direct public engagement through our research function and through work with our partners, such as PEDRI and ADRUK

We always seek to demonstrate our values through this user engagement –responding with empathy and professionalism.

### Domains

OSR organises our core regulatory work around domains. Domains are thematic areas of public interest.

We currently have seven domains:

- Housing, Environment, Agriculture and Transport
- Health and Social Care
- Crime, Education and Justice
- Labour Market and Welfare
- Economy, Business and Trade
- Population and Society
- Cross-Cutting Team

Our level of activity and focus on domains varies depending on public interest quality concerns and the level of innovation shown by the producers of statistics in each domain. So, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Health and Social Care domain featured the highest level of activity. More recently, with the concerns in the media and in parliament

relating to ONS and the economic and survey statistics it produces, our Economy, Business and Trade and Labour Market and Welfare domains have seen high levels of activity. The Crime, Education and Justice and Population and Society domains have also seen significant activity.

We do not seek to predict which domains will have the highest level of activity over the next few years. This will depend on emerging areas of quality concern. However, three domains are likely to be particularly active in the first two years of the strategy, and probably beyond:

- Economy, Business and Trade: In April 2025, we published our review of the quality of ONS's economic statistics. This review highlighted a series of quality concerns and set a requirement for ONS to publish and implement a recovery plan for its core surveys and overall delivery plan for economic statistics. ONS published both in June 2025. In 2025, 2026 and 2027, we will focus on both the implementation of this plan, and on providing assurance on the extent to which ONS is addressing quality issues.
- Labour Market and Welfare: ONS and the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) will continue to transform their labour force surveys, with key decision points currently scheduled for 2025 and 2026. We will ensure that these transformations are carried out in line with the standards of the Code.
- Population and Society: There are significant projects on population statistics – first, because of the shift to using administrative data to estimate migration and the overall population, and second, because NISRA, National Records of Scotland and ONS are all preparing for Census 2031.

We also have created a new cross-cutting domain. This domain leads on systemic issues and is therefore crucial to our ability to drive system improvements (strategic theme 2).

## Development functions

Our development functions ensure that we are continuously refreshing the foundations that underpin our work and keep pace and contribute to new thinking in the world of statistics.

Our development functions are:

- Policy and Standards: The Code is a key part of the standards against which we form our judgements in assessments (strategic theme 1). Our supporting guidance also acts as a catalyst for systemic improvement (strategic theme 2).
- Data and Methods: Ensures that we are equipped to regulate in an evolving world and that we have the expertise to keep pace.
- Research: Breaks new ground in our understanding of how statistics can serve the public good. Our research function ensures that we remain curious and innovative and that our regulatory model has strong foundations.
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## Support functions

Our support functions ensure that we operate with efficiency and impact.

- Communications: Manages our communication, outreach and engagement with users and stakeholders (all strategic themes), maximising our reach and impact.
- Business Support and Private Office: Underpin our organisational effectiveness, ensuring our working is well managed.
- Evaluation: Monitors and reports on our impact and outcomes, including our progress against the commitments in this strategy.

## Tools

Our key tools are:

- the Code
- reviews of compliance
- accreditation of official statistics
- systemic reviews
- guidance, outreach and convening
- research
- casework

We will balance our use of these tools according to the improvement and assurance that we are seeking to provide. For example, when conducting reviews of accredited official statistics, our primary tools are compliance reviews and accreditation, supported by systemic reviews.

## Case studies

### Case study: Economic statistics

We have conducted a series of assessments since 2020 which have highlighted issues with economic statistics. They include our reviews of the Labour Force Survey and the Transformed Labour Force Survey; GDP revisions; and trade.

These assessments have highlighted a range of issues, including user engagement, communication and survey quality. In this sense, we have been a **credible and rigorous regulator**.

We also launched a review of the quality of economic statistics in July 2024, which highlighted a range of systemic concerns. This review was published in April 2025, and formed a key input into the Devereux Review of ONS performance and culture, and the subsequent ONS recovery plans. This demonstrates how we can act as a **system catalyst**.

However, we recognise that we could have communicated our concerns more clearly to users of statistics – and brought our systemic perspective out earlier.

This case study therefore both illustrates how we already align to some extent with the new strategic themes, but also how we must do more to fully demonstrate them in our work.

### Case study of impact – Intelligent transparency

During the pandemic, we looked at a series of cases surrounding the transparency of government statistics and data – including on testing, on care homes and on vaccinations.

As a result of these interventions, we launched a campaign to encourage government departments to adopt the principles of intelligent transparency – that is, that statistics and data should be used publicly in a way that enables people to both access and understand the underlying evidence. We prompted these principles to the statistical system, the Government Communications Service and policymakers in government. They were also endorsed by the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs select committee in their report on government evidence.

These standards have been adopted in many government departments, as our forthcoming review of intelligent transparency shows. But there are still cases where government departments issue press notices and other types of statement where the underlying data are not clear.

This case study illustrates what it means to act as a **champion for public use of statistics** – stepping in during the pandemic to ensure the public had access to relevant evidence. And it also shows how we can draw on these interventions to make a system-wide impact – and thereby act as a **system catalyst**.

