

FRAMEWORK FOR SCOTTISH OFFICIAL STATISTICS

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INTRODUCTION

1. This Framework for Scottish Official Statistics is intended to provide a clear statement of how the statistics produced by, or for, the Scottish Government are managed and how professional independence of the production and publication of those statistics is upheld in line with National Statistics and international standards.
2. It covers the arrangements for statistics within Scottish Government directorates and in the other bodies producing official statistics, principally the General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) and the Information Services Division of the National Health Service Scotland (ISD).
3. The Framework is likely to be amended as new National Statistics arrangements are put in place by the independent UK Statistics Authority which operates across the four UK administrations. The Scottish Government is also reviewing the relationship between central government and the rest of the public sector in terms of statistics production and publication, and this too will have an impact on the Framework.
4. The Framework is in any event intended to be a document that is reviewed and updated as and when necessary.

FOREWORD

Statistics are an essential part of government and a parliamentary democracy. They provide government and those involved in delivering public services with the information they need to plan, monitor and review decisions. They also provide Parliament, the public and media with the information they need to form their own views on matters of public policy and judge the implementation and impact of government decisions. Government statistics, which cover many aspects of society, also provide valuable information for a huge range of users – from businesses to students.

With this diverse range of users and interests in mind we consider the arrangements for the management of statistics, and especially the arrangements to assure professional independence and objectivity, to be of the utmost importance. We are committed to the best international statistics standards and principles.

But beyond that the Scottish Government is committed to public services that are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs. That is an outcome that we seek for the statistics service as much as any other part of government.

This Framework, which will in due course be complemented by a revised Code of Practice for official statistics provides in some detail the arrangements we have in place to manage statistics in a way which meets these aims.

Jim Mather

Minister for Enterprise, Energy and Tourism with responsibility for overall statistics arrangements.

BACKGROUND

5. A Framework for National Statistics was agreed by the four administrations in the United Kingdom in 2000.¹ It set out the governance arrangements, the key principles and standards that should apply to the production and publication of statistics. It was subsequently augmented by the National Statistics Code of Practice which set out standards in more detail.²

6. It had been agreed that a review of the framework would be undertaken, there being many aspects that required updating and amendment. This included some ambiguities around the role of the UK National Statistician in Scotland and the fact that the Framework was produced in the very early years after devolution. The UK Government carried out their own review of this Framework in 2005 resulting in the Statistics & Registration Service Act 2007, which the Scottish Parliament agreed should apply to Scotland in relation to some provisions. It is now appropriate to update and revise the broader aspects of the Framework as it applies to the Scottish Government.

7. This new Framework for Scottish Official Statistics replaces the National Statistics framework in Scotland.

SCOTTISH OFFICIAL STATISTICS

8. Terms such as “official figures” and “official statistics” have been widely used without any consistency of meaning. This section defines what we mean by “official statistics”.

9. The Statistics & Registration Service Act 2007 for the first time defines Official Statistics, as

(a) Statistics produced by the UK Statistics Authority, a government department, the Scottish Administration, a Welsh ministerial authority, a Northern Ireland department, or any other person acting on behalf of the Crown

(b) Such other statistics as may be specified by order by a Minister of the Crown, the Scottish Ministers, the Welsh Ministers, or a Northern Ireland department.

¹ The Framework for National Statistics can be found at:

http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about/national_statistics/downloads/FrameDoc1.pdf

² The National Statistics Code of Practice can be found at:

http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about/national_statistics/cop/default.asp

10. The Statistics & Registration Service Act 2007 does not define "statistics" but planned European statistical law³ does - as "quantitative and qualitative aggregated and representative information characterising a collective phenomenon in considered populations." This definition is not particularly clear and it is to be hoped that the UK Statistics Authority will provide further guidance on what types of information should be included or not.

11. National Statistics are a subset of official statistics – see paragraphs 36 to 40.

12. In defining more precisely what we mean by Official Statistics we regard the most important considerations to be

- (a) What range of statistics the government and other public sector bodies should produce and make publicly available.
- (b) What quantitative information should be produced according to the standards, scrutiny, rules and procedures set out in the Statistics & Registration Service Act 2007.
- (c) What quantitative information should be produced or managed by professionally competent statistical staff rather than others.

Official Statistics within central government

13. At present Official Statistics in Scotland consist mainly of regular and planned statistics and analysis produced by statistics units in the Scottish Government, GROS and ISD.⁴

14. But this does not include the following information:

- (a) Additional analysis produced by statisticians
 - for use mainly within government to assist policy development and monitoring and to assist management decisions.
 - for Parliamentary Questions, although many replies are based on Official Statistics and flagged up as such.
 - in response to other user enquiries.

It is important that statisticians are able to produce such analysis to meet ad hoc internal and external user needs. Depending on the user requirement certain standards may vary considerably.

- (b) Some data which are produced on a regular basis for operational management purposes within government. For example management

³ Existing Council Regulation (EC) No 322/97 of 17 February 1997 on Community statistics is that "Community statistics shall mean quantitative, aggregated and representative information taken from the collection and systematic processing of data, produced by the national authorities and the Community authority in the framework of implementation of the Community statistical programme."

⁴ Background data and notes (e.g. on methodology) are not official statistics as such but are for the most part covered by the same standards, although they are released in different ways.

sources may provide information on the health or education system before the Official Statistics are available. Where such data or similar data are also used to produce official statistics then the public interest is served. In other cases either the public interest and/or the management process may not be best served by classifying the data as Official Statistics although it remains subject to the Freedom of Information Acts.

15. Other parts of government produce quantitative information. However Official Statistics do not include

(a) Most financial data - as rigorous accounting and auditing procedures are in place.

(b) Quantitative information produced by government scientists and social researchers where alternative protocols for the production, quality assurance and publication of such information exists. This includes adoption of common standards with official statistics where appropriate.

(c) Quantitative information produced by economists and policy/administrative staff. Such information is likely to be equivalent to 14 (a) or (b) above.

16. Official Statistics also include any major recurring surveys managed by researchers in the Scottish Government primarily for statistical purposes. At present this is only the Scottish Crime & Justice Survey.

17. Further information on what is included and excluded is in Annex A. We will continue to produce a rolling programme of Scottish Official Statistics to be released over the coming year and make this available on the Statistics Scotland website

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/> .

18. It is recognised that the designation of Official Statistics needs to be done in a way which enables the UK Statistics Authority to exercise its statutory functions⁵ in relation to "official statistics that serve the public good". The latter is defined in the Statistics & Registration Service Act 2007 to include not only informing the public about social and economic matters but also assisting in the development and evaluation of public policy.

19. We also recognise that the exclusion of certain types of government data may raise concerns.

20. Whenever significant analysis is produced on ad hoc basis by statisticians we will consider whether such outputs should be produced as Official Statistics in future. If the figures are going to be produced regularly or there is significant public need/demand for them the presumption is that they will be produced as Official Statistics in future.

⁵ The UK Statistics Authority's functions in relation to Official Statistics include promoting and safeguarding the quality, impartiality and comprehensiveness of Official Statistics through the Code, the designation process for National Statistics and through other means.

21. We also recognise that our exclusion of ad hoc research surveys may be an issue and will review this decision if and when it becomes clear that the public or Parliament consider such information should be included as Official Statistics.

22. We will also regularly review the other types of quantitative information produced in each of the other categories above and where appropriate transfer it to official statistics production by statistical staff. These reviews will be made public.

Statistics produced by other public bodies

23. The Statistics & Registration Service Act 2007 allows Ministers to determine, by parliamentary Order, that statistics produced by other bodies are classified as Official Statistics.

24. In the first Order passed in March 2008 ISD were included within Official Statistics along with the Higher Education Statistics Agency and the Student Loans Company, all of which are established National Statistics producers.

25. Beyond that no arrangements are currently in place for other public sector bodies or local government to produce and publish outputs according to Official Statistics standards so they are excluded other than where the statistics are also collected, quality assured and published by Scottish Government statistics units. However discussions will be held on the possibility and desirability of extending the Official Statistics arrangements to these other bodies.

Concluding point on Official Statistics

26. Overall the most important safeguard is that there will be regular consultation on what is included in Official Statistics and this will involve highlighting any high profile quantitative information that is not included. As such the scope of our official Statistics will be subject to scrutiny by the public, Parliament and the UK Statistics Authority.

STATISTICS AND DEVOLUTION

27. Both the Scottish Government and the UK Government produce Official Statistics on Scotland. This section clarifies in broad terms who produces what.

28. Production and publication of statistics is a function that is ancillary to other government functions. So statistics produced to support devolved decision-making are themselves devolved. Only statistics produced to support reserved functions are reserved by UK Government. There is no reserved power to produce general UK statistics other than on reserved matters. However the Statistics Concordat, a voluntary agreement, recognises the role of UK Government in producing such statistics.

29. In most cases who produces the statistics, and their devolved or reserved status are clear cut. It is for example evident that whilst there are some reserved functions which may require statistics on Scottish education, these should be produced as devolved statistics. Similarly whilst some statistics on defence may be relevant to a devolved function, these should be produced as reserved statistics.

30. So in practice statistics produced by the Scottish Government are generally accepted as devolved statistics. The UK Government's outputs are more complicated because of its role in producing UK wide statistics.

31. The following sets out the position with regard to the more complex areas.⁶ Some information on arrangements for production and sharing of these statistics are set out in the Statistics Concordat.⁷ See also paragraphs 70 to 71 below. Any of the arrangements below may be subject to sharing of costs, although the Office for National Statistics (ONS) is funded as a GB wide body for the most part.

(a) Statistics on devolved matters required by UK Government to meet international requirements.

Collection/production- These remain devolved statistics and are produced by the Scottish Government.

Publication - Responsibility for deciding first release remains with the Scottish Government. Most international outputs use already-published statistics and are published according to international protocols (e.g. Eurostat).

Supply - The role of the UK Government in meeting international requirements is recognised and supported through the Statistics Concordat. The Scottish Government will ensure the production of statistics on wholly devolved matters needed to meet such requirements.

(b) Statistics on devolved matters required to meet UK Government reserved policy needs such as for monetary and fiscal policy.

Collection/production- Production of such statistics also remains devolved in general.

Publication - Again responsibility for deciding first release remains with the Scottish Government and in most cases they are published

⁶ In the Statistics & Registration Service Act 2007 devolved statistics are specified as

(a) statistics which relate to matters in Scotland which are not reserved matters, unless produced for reserved purposes

(b) statistics which relate to reserved matters if produced for devolved purposes

(c) statistics produced by cross border authorities only if the statistics relate wholly to Scotland

⁷ See section E of

http://www.dca.gov.uk/constitution/devolution/pubs/odpm_dev_600629.pdf

first by the Scottish Government. Where statistics on devolved matters are published as part of a UK product for reserved purposes (e.g. National Accounts) the UK Government's protocols apply although subject to the Concordat.

Supply - The Scottish Government will ensure statistics needed to meet a statutory UK government requirement will be honoured. In relation to other UK Government requirements supply may depend on the business case.

- (c) Statistics on devolved matters required to support the role of UK Government in producing UK wide statistical reports.

Collection/production- These are not produced in support of a reserved power but stem from the Statistics Concordat and a recognition of the importance of UK wide and inter-country comparisons on devolved as well as reserved matters. They remain devolved statistics.

There is a statutory requirement for the UK Statistics Authority to secure the consent of Scottish Ministers before producing such statistics. Other UK Departments are covered by the Concordat and in general are only able to do so by agreement.

Publication - Publication is as in (a) and (b) above.

Supply - Scottish Government will liaise with the UK Government and other devolved administrations to ensure that the need for statistics covering more than one country in the UK is addressed. Priority will be given according to the business cases available.

- (d) Statistics on the economy, business and the labour market.

Collection/production- At devolution in 1999 UK Government retained its statistical functions and resources involved in these statistics, even where the primary statistical use was in relation to devolved matters. The Scottish Government therefore focuses on the following:

- producing additional statistical outputs and analyses specific to Scotland to meet Scottish needs, but mostly derived from UK Government sources.
- improving the quality of UK statistical sources and outputs in collaboration with UK Government.
- funding improvements to these sources considered necessary for devolved purposes.
- developing a limited number of new sources to enhance the above.

Publication – *The main UK outputs and many Scottish figures are published by UK Government according to their protocols. The Scottish Government publishes most of the outputs of its own work noted above, including any survey boosts and is responsible for deciding publication arrangements for such boosts.*

Supply - *Supply of such statistics is covered by the Concordat and various other agreements (see para 70(c)).*

(e) Other UK surveys and data collection covering reserved and devolved matters

Collection/production – it is convenient for some surveys to be carried out across the UK and to include questions on devolved matters. Resultant statistics on devolved matters are devolved. This includes the General Household Survey now moving to become part of the ONS Integrated Survey.

Some cross-border bodies also collect data in relation to Scottish devolved matters. This includes the Higher Education Statistics Agency and the Forestry Commission.

All such statistics remain devolved even though produced by UK bodies and Scottish Ministers' agreement is required for their production.

Publication - Scottish Ministers may agree to the first release of such statistics as part of a UK or GB publication. Discussions on appropriate release arrangements are still to take place.

32. None of the above precludes the incidental use of already published statistics by UK Government or by Scottish Government to support reserved or devolved matters respectively.

AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND STANDARDS

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF SCOTTISH OFFICIAL STATISTICS

33. In making decisions about Scottish Official Statistics all involved will have the following objectives:

To ensure production of the statistics needed to:

- (a) assist government and its agencies to carry out its business efficiently and effectively and to make decisions on an informed basis.
- (b) allow Scottish Ministers to formulate policies and monitor and evaluate delivery so as to promote progress of their objectives for Scotland.
- (c) inform the Scottish Parliament about the state of the nation and the performance of government and to allow the impact of government policies and actions to be assessed.
- (d) support the accountability of government to the general public for the performance of the services provided through public resources/taxpayers money.
- (e) provide business and other public bodies with statistics on public matters needed for them to operate efficiently and effectively.
- (f) provide researchers, analysts, other customers and the general public with statistics needed to assist their work and studies.
- (g) provide the statistics required to meet international obligations and facilitate comparisons between Scotland and other countries.

To build public trust and confidence in statistics by:

- achieving the highest standards of professional independence.
- ensuring that Ministers do not control methods of production or format, content and timing of statistics releases.
- ensuring that Ministers are ultimately responsible for the scope and coverage of statistics but decisions on these matters should be delegated as much as possible to the professional statistical service and subject to public and Parliamentary scrutiny.
- ensuring that the planning and production of statistics is co-ordinated and integrated with other government research and analysis to promote an holistic approach to the production of evidence to support policy formulation and delivery.
- achieving efficiency and effectiveness in collection and production, eliminating unnecessary burden on data providers, and making use of administrative data where appropriate for statistical purposes.

- adhering to other international standards for the integrity of statistics, including openness and involvement of users.

To ensure that official statistics meet international standards for the quality of statistics, namely:

- relevance
- accuracy
- timeliness
- accessibility and clarity
- comparability and coherence

STATISTICAL STANDARDS

The above objectives are translated into a set of standards most of which are set out in codes of practice.

34. The Scottish Government will ensure that its statistics meet international standards and in particular the following

(a) United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/dnss/fundprinciples.aspx>

(b) The European Statistics Code of Practice

http://epp.eurostat.cec.eu.int/pls/portal/docs/PAGE/PGP_DS_QUALITY/TAB47141301/VERSIONE_INGLESE_WEB.PDF

35. These requirements are embodied in the National Statistics Code of Practice adopted across the UK, soon to be replaced by a UK Code of Practice for Statistics to be produced by the UK Statistics Authority.

36. National Statistics are currently those that have been so designated by Ministers with the agreement of the UK National Statistician. In future the Authority will decide whether statistics can be designated as National Statistics, though it will only consider statistics that have been proposed for National Statistics status by Scottish Ministers.

37. The key feature of National Statistics is that their production must comply with the Code of Practice – and hence that they meet required standards of integrity and quality. In future they will require to be assessed for compliance by the Authority.

38. The National Statistics Code will also be used for all other Official Statistics in the Scottish Government. However some Official Statistics will not be branded as National Statistics because

(a) quality assurance of the series may be less rigorous albeit still appropriate to the purpose of the statistics.

(b) the quality of the statistics may be undergoing an improvement programme.

(c) there may be some elements of release practices that cannot meet National Statistics's requirements.

39. The Scottish Government's current compliance with the National Statistics Code is set out in its Compliance Statement⁸.

40. The National Statistics Code, and indeed international standards, are considered to be the minimum necessary to achieve the Scottish Government's objectives for statistics. Following the review of the National Statistics Code the Scottish Government may introduce additional standards, particularly to ensure the relevance of statistics, the effective co-ordination of statistics with research and analysis and to ensure that there is public confidence that the statistics needed are produced. Arrangements for pre-release access to statistics in their final form before publication are, as required by the Statistics & Registration Service Act 2007, set out in a Parliamentary Order.

⁸ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/03/20843/54401> This will be updated when the new Code and pre-release arrangements are in place.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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The Chief Statistician and Heads of Profession

41. The **Chief Statistician** in the Scottish Government has overall responsibility for the implementation and coordination of Official Statistics standards in the Scottish Administration. In particular the Chief Statistician is responsible for the following in consultation with the other Heads of Profession for statistics:

- (a) Setting the planning framework for Scottish Official Statistics and producing the Scottish Statistics Plan.
- (b) Establishing and maintaining the overall arrangements for involving users and providers.
- (c) Ensuring adherence to the National Statistics Code and resolving any issues concerning the interpretation and application of the Code in Scotland.
- (d) Setting any common standards for statistical classifications and methods, in collaboration with other Heads of Profession in Scotland, Chief Statisticians in other devolved administrations and the National Statistician.
- (e) Final decisions on interpretation of standards for data confidentiality.
- (f) Reporting to Parliament on Official Statistics performance.

42. **Heads of Profession** are appointed for all other Scottish producers of official statistics (ISD, GROS) and the Chief Statistician acts as Head of Profession for all Scottish Government Directorates and Executive agencies.

43. Heads of Profession are responsible for

- (a) The format, content and timing of statistical releases. This includes handling revisions.
- (b) Promoting compliance with the National Statistics Code.
- (c) Reporting on Official Statistics performance, reporting breaches of the Code and referring matters related to professional integrity to the National Statistician or UK Statistics Authority, after consulting with the Chief Statistician.
- (d) Producing a plan for approval by Scottish Ministers as part of the Scottish Government Statistics planning framework and contributing to any reporting by the Chief Statistician.
- (e) Advising Ministers on the scope of statistics produced and making decisions within the overall resources available subject to public consultation and Parliamentary scrutiny.
- (f) User and provider involvement, within the overall Scottish framework.

- (g) Ensuring and developing the professional competence of their staff.
- (h) Deciding methodologies and statistical classifications within any Scottish Government framework, which is in turn informed by UK and international standards.
- (i) Promoting the professional independence of their organisation's statistical work, the quality of its outputs and the integrity and validity of its statistics and commentary.
- (j) Setting and implementing standards for data confidentiality, and other requirements for data management and retention consistent with National Statistics principles.

44. In practice much of the decision making on a day to day basis is delegated to senior statistical staff and the role of the Head of Profession is to set the policy framework and intervene where necessary.

Statistical staff

45. Within the above set of responsibilities the production of statistics is carried out by

- (a) Professional statisticians who are members of the Government Statistical Service or staff who meet GSS standards of professional competence and who are professionally accountable to a Statistics Head of Profession.
- (b) Other staff who are responsible to the above.
- (c) Other staff (e.g. researchers) who for the purposes of statistical production comply with the Code of Practice/Conduct and whose compliance with the Code is supervised by the Head of Profession for Statistics.

Senior management

46. All statisticians are responsible to other senior managers within their line management structures, and ultimately responsible to the Permanent Secretary in the Scottish Government.

47. In Scottish Government Directorates, most statisticians work within Analytical Services Divisions alongside social researchers and economists. They are responsible on a day to day basis through their line management to a Deputy Director (Analytical Services) within each Directorate. This integration of statisticians with other analysts working closely with policy staff is an important strength of the Scottish Government statistical set-up.

48. Heads of Analytical Services Divisions are responsible for

- (a) the quality and scope of statistics in their area, subject to agreement/endorsement by the Chief Statistician,
- (b) plans, priorities and consultation subject to consultation with the Chief Statistician.

49. The Chief Statistician is responsible to the Director of Corporate Analytical Services who ensures co-ordination and collaboration between the analytical professions and between Directorates. Similarly the Chief Statistician works closely with the Chief Economic Adviser and Chief Researcher, and where appropriate the application of statistical standards and methods is agreed with them.

50. In all of the above Heads of Analytical Services Divisions and other senior professionals will work within the Code of Practice and will for the above purposes be considered as part of the statistical production process.

51. A smaller number of statisticians are responsible to other senior managers. This occurs where the statistics are produced primarily to support management processes though they are also made public. These line managers are also responsible to Ministers for policy advice and/or are accountable for policy delivery. So whilst they may continue to ensure that statistical methodologies and classifications meet policy requirements and that the format, content or timing of published statistics are appropriate to their needs, the Chief Statistician has the right to make any final decision on any Official Statistics.

52. As Head of Profession for NHS, the Director of ISD, reports to Chief Executive, NHS National Services Scotland, and is a member of the NHS Board. All NHS Boards are directly accountable to Scottish Government Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing, and Chief Executives report to Director-General Health and Chief Executive NHS Scotland.

Ministers

53. A Minister in the Scottish Government is designated as **Minister for statistics**. He/she is responsible for

(a) maintaining and developing the overall arrangements for Official statistics and National Statistics taking account of international standards and principles

(b) acting on behalf of Scottish Ministers in relation to functions specified in the Statistics & Registration Service Act 2007 i.e.

- Board (UK Statistics Authority) Membership – the appointment of one non-executive member of the Board after consulting Scottish Ministers.
- Consultation on Code - the UK Statistics Authority must consult Scottish Ministers on the preparation or revision of the Code of Practice for Statistics.
- Designation of statistics as National Statistics – the UK Statistics Authority must assess statistics on devolved matters as National Statistics when requested to do so by Scottish Ministers.
- Pre-release access for Ministers – Scottish Ministers will decide on the rules and principles for access to Scottish devolved statistics; these are set out in the Parliamentary Order on pre-release. This

means access to Official Statistics in their final form prior to publication.

- Consultation on the Board's Principles and Procedures - the UK Statistics Authority must consult Scottish Ministers on the preparation or revision of the statement of their principles and procedures with regards to assessment.
- Production of Statistics – the UK Statistics Authority must obtain the consent of Scottish Ministers before producing or publishing statistics on devolved matters.
- Directions – Scottish Ministers can, with consent of Chancellor of Exchequer, give the UK Statistics Authority directions to remedy any failure in its objective or functions relating to statistics on devolved matters.
- Sharing of information – Scottish Ministers can authorise Scottish public authorities to share with the UK Statistics Authority information which would otherwise be prohibited (except under data protection and human rights legislation), authorise the UK Statistics Authority to use the information and to disclose to Scottish public authorities information which it has obtained from Whitehall departments.

54. **All Ministers** are responsible for the following in relation to statistics in their own portfolios

- (a) approving the scope and coverage of Official Statistics produced and the resources devoted to the production of such statistics.
- (b) deciding which Official Statistics should be put forward as National Statistics

55. In relation to 54 (a) above

- (a) Decisions on these matters will be delegated generally as far as possible to the professional statistical service.
- (b) The Chief Statistician and Heads of Profession have authority to make day to day decisions on priorities and to produce such information and analysis as they consider necessary within existing resources.
- (c) All decisions including those by Ministers and Senior Management on their behalf which determine what is produced, and decisions by the Chief Statistician and Heads of Profession will be subject to consultation including with users, and scrutiny by Parliament.

56. As noted earlier a key principle of the Code and international standards is that Ministers do not make decisions on

- (a) the format, content or timing of statistics releases
- (b) methodologies and statistical classifications.

57. As key users, they and staff advising them are entitled to comment on any aspect of the above as is any other user. In recognising their influence

and the risk that any comments could be construed as exerting an undue influence over the final decision the following safeguards will be put in place

(a) Ministers will raise such matters through the Head of Profession or other statisticians with delegated authority.

(b) Any correspondence or discussion on such matters will be open to scrutiny by the UK Statistics Authority and others even where it may be exempt information under the Freedom of Information Act.

58. Beyond the above, and other than as specified in the Statistics & Registration Service Act 2007, all other decisions on statistics produced by or for Scottish Government Directorates (other than GROS) are delegated by Ministers to the **Chief Statistician** or **Heads of Profession**. This includes delegation of the functions of the "person responsible" set out in the Pre-Release Access to Statistics Order to the Chief Statistician and Heads of Profession.

The Scottish Parliament

59. The Finance Committee of the Parliament has included general statistics matters in its work programme. Statistics on particular topics are the subject of consideration by other Committees.

60. The involvement of Parliament in the scrutiny of Official Statistics will be supported. Parliament will be given direct access to senior statistical staff to answer on matters which are delegated to them. The Statistics & Registration Service Act 2007 requires the UK Statistics Authority to lay an annual report before the Scottish Parliament and any other report it sees fit.

The UK Statistics Authority

61. The UK Statistics Authority is responsible for the functions specified in the Statistics & Registration Service Act 2007, principally

(a) monitoring the production and publication of Official Statistics including the quality, practices and comprehensiveness

(b) reporting on the above including directly to Parliament

(c) developing and maintaining definitions, methodologies, classifications and standards for Official Statistics and promoting their use

(d) issuing guidance and advice in relation to the above

(e) producing a Code of Practice for Official Statistics in consultation with Scottish Ministers

(f) assessing and designating Official Statistics as National Statistics following a request by Scottish Ministers

(g) notifying Scottish Ministers if considers that other Official Statistics should be designated as National Statistics

(h) specified powers to assist data sharing.

The UK National Statistician

62. The UK National Statistician will in future act on behalf of the UK Statistics Authority in relation to many issues. He/she will also act in accordance with Code of Practice which will in effect define his/her role in relation to Scottish statistics. There may be an additional Code of Conduct which will also cover the National Statistician's role.

63. The UK National Statistician is head of the Government Statistical Service, and sets professional standards and arrangements to support it. The UK National Statistician is not operationally responsible for any Scottish Official Statistics.

PLANNING AND REPORTING, CONSULTATION AND LIAISON

PLANS, PRIORITIES AND PROGRAMMES FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS

64. The Scottish Government will consult all interested parties fully on its plans, priorities and programmes for Scottish Official Statistics.

65. For most Scottish Government Directorates these plans, priorities and programmes will be part of broader analytical planning alongside social and economic research and analysis.

66. The Scottish Government will issue draft plans and priorities to interested parties, and provide scope for Parliament to comment on final plans and priorities prior to publication.

67. Particular emphasis will be given to openness on the range of statistics produced and to information which is not included within the Official Statistics but where there may be a public interest in it (see paragraph 18 onwards).

USERS AND PROVIDERS

68. The Scottish Government makes arrangements for the involvement of users and providers in all decision making on statistics matters through

(a) ScotStat, its network for users and providers, which includes:

- the ScotStat Board
- committees or groups on broad areas of statistics
- an opportunity for other groups to affiliate to ScotStat
- an opportunity for anybody to register their interest in particular statistics issues and receive appropriate correspondence
- networking opportunities

(b) a programme of conferences, seminars and meetings on statistics issues

(c) general consultation on key issues and more focused consultation on specific issues.

69. The Scottish Government will involve users outwith Scotland and users with an interest in statistics across the UK through

(a) maintaining the use of the internet for ScotStat purposes and for consultations

(b) liaising with the UK Government Statistical Users Forum

(c) making arrangements with other administrations for UK wide users views to be fed into decision making.

RELATIONS WITH UK GOVERNMENT AND OTHER DEVOLVED ADMINISTRATIONS

70. Relations with the UK Government, the UK Statistics Authority in its role as producer of statistics for the UK Government, and other administrations are subject to

(a) The Statistics Concordat (1999) which is turn part of the Memorandum of Understanding. This is in need of update.

(b) Principles and practices set out in the National Statistics Code of Practice (2002).

(c) A series of working level or service level agreements as follows :

- Overall Service Level Agreement between ONS and the Scottish Government
- Provision by ONS of quarterly extracts from the Inter-departmental Business Register
- Provision and advice by ONS in relation to Macro-economic statistics
- Quarterly Inquiry into Insurance Companies- provision of data by ONS
- Provision of data by ONS for the Scottish Input-Output Tables
- Provision of data by ONS on labour market statistics from the Annual Population Survey.
- Provision of data provided by SG on Public Sector Employment
- GROS/ONS – Geography and postcode directory file interchange
- [The conduct of the 2011 Censuses in the UK - Statement of Agreement between the Registrars General](#)
- Civil Registration cooperation (GROS/Identity and Passport Service)
- National Health Service Central Register (GROS/NHS Information Centre)
- Provision of data by DWP from Family Resources Survey (FRS) and Households Below Average Income (HBAI) and other sources – covered by a Service Level Agreement
- Provision of data by HMRC
- Working level agreement on children, schools and families statistics between SG and the Department for Children, Schools and Families

(d) A range of Government Statistical Service committees and working groups on professional standards and practices and National Statistics planning groups.

71. The Inter Administration Committee of GSS involving the National Statistician and Chief Statisticians in each devolved administration is the main body responsible for ensuring effective liaison.

72. The draft remit of that Committee is as follows:

- (a) identifying where there is a user need for comparable and cohesive statistics across administrations including accessibility and metadata to assess comparability;
- (b) developing a prioritised programme to address comparability and coherence issues through Theme Groups and other GSS groups;
- (c) considering UK government statistics needed for devolved purposes in reserved policy areas, and devolved statistics needed for UK purposes. This could include cost sharing practices;
- (d) enhancing the user voice (with an emphasis on those users requiring UK-wide and international statistics);
- (e) considering Statistics Reform Issues e.g. Code of Practice for Statistics, Statistics Concordat, Frameworks, etc.
- (f) improving arrangements to share best practice across administrations; and
- (g) considering international issues including meeting international requirements and arrangements for moving forward issues that would benefit sub UK international comparisons.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

73. Statistics are covered by the Freedom of Information Acts. In meeting the requirements of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 the Scottish Government has issued guidance on specific issues that arise in relation to statistics. This is published at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/scotstat/foi-guidance>

74. Key points are

- (a) Obligations under the National Statistics Code in terms of openness and provision of information are additional to FoI requirements.
- (b) In meeting FoI requirements we will maintain our interest in ensuring that statistics are accurate, fit for purpose and are not misused or disclosive, although none of that changes the rights of access to information under FoI.
- (c) As a general principle exemptions will not be applied where the information would not normally be refused under the National Statistics Code of Practice.
- (d) Even where the request is refused on the basis of particular exemption the applicant will be informed

- when any statistics sought will be available
 - of any next best alternatives. This may be published information.
- (e) Staff should continue to follow best practice in terms of ensuring that the information request is clear and that any data requested will meet the applicant's needs.

ANNUAL REPORT

75. Under National Statistics arrangements the Chief Statistician was to publish an annual report on Scottish Official Statistics. In view of the extremely limited demand for this report, the emphasis is now on providing such information to the UK Statistics Authority. This will be reviewed in the light of decisions by the UK Statistics Authority on their reporting procedures.

Annex A - Further Information on Scope of Scottish Official Statistics

Type of information	Included in official statistic	Excluded from official statistics
<p>Statistics and analysis produced by or on behalf of</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Statistics units in Directorates within the Scottish Government 2. Statisticians in Executive agencies (Inspectorate of Education and the Social Work Inspection Agency) 3. General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) 4. Information Services Division (ISD) of NHS Scotland on behalf of central government 	<p>All regular and planned statistical publications and subsequent publication in statistical compendia.</p>	<p>Analysis produced mainly for internal purposes, for Parliamentary Questions or user enquiries.</p>
<p>Statistics on devolved matters produced by statistics units in UK Government Departments and agencies, including the Forestry Commission and cross border authorities.</p>	<p>As above</p>	<p>As above</p>
<p>Quantitative outputs produced by or for researchers in government</p>	<p>Major repeating surveys managed by researchers – at present only the Crime & Justice Survey.</p>	<p>Longitudinal surveys, opinion and attitude surveys and ad hoc surveys carried out in support of research Other quantitative information produced as part of research.</p>
<p>Financial information</p>	<p>Where the process of compilation has undergone statistical validation to ensure the principles of the Statistics Code are met is included. At present this includes local government finance statistics and a range of public expenditure statistics.</p>	<p>Most central government budget and expenditure data.</p>
<p>Scientific data</p>	<p>Only where it forms an input to a broader statistics output.</p>	<p>All other scientific data.</p>

Type of information	Included in official statistic	Excluded from official statistics
Quantitative information produced by administrative, policy and economics staff	Some jointly produced statistics or analysis such as Government Expenditure and Revenue in Scotland (GERS) where the overall process is managed in line with Official Statistics procedures.	Everything else.
Statistics produced by public sector bodies including local government	Only through Scottish Government statistics units.	Everything else.

Annex B – Notes about Publication and Revision

Version 1 Published 9 July 2008

This Framework will be updated on the Scottish Government statistics internet site at:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/About>

Any questions or points about the Framework should be sent to:

Rob Wishart
Chief Statistician
Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh EH1 3DG
Tel - 0131 204 0302

or Rob.Wishart@scotland.gsi.gov.uk