



Framework for National Statistics

First Edition
Operational from June 2000

FOREWORD

By the Economic Secretary to the Treasury and Ministers in the devolved administrations

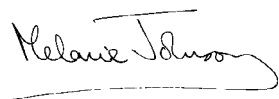
In Opposition the Government made a manifesto pledge to provide independent national statistics. This Document, along with the appointment of the Statistics Commission and a National Statistician, puts in place the new arrangements that deliver our promise of statistics that command the trust and confidence of the public.

National Statistics represents the outcome of extensive work to put the nation's statistics, so vital for good government and for society more generally, on a new and enhanced footing. It represents the biggest overhaul of official statistics for over thirty years. These arrangements also have the full support of Ministers in the devolved administrations.

The new arrangements will provide a statistical service that is open and responsive to society's needs and the public agenda: better and more reliable official statistics that command public confidence. Greater accountability is central to a modernising agenda. So National Statistics embodies:

- ⊙ an improved statistical service led by the National Statistician;
- ⊙ an independent Statistics Commission to act as a guardian of statistical integrity;
- ⊙ an enhanced scrutiny role for our Parliaments and Assemblies if they so wish.

Hence, National Statistics represents a new and clear direction for official statistics – a legacy for a new Millennium delivering statistics that will command public confidence.



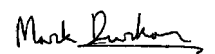
Melanie Johnson (MP) Economic Secretary, Her Majesty's Treasury



Jack McConnell (MSP) Minister for Finance, Scottish Executive



Edwina Hart (AM) Finance Secretary, National Assembly for Wales



Mark Durkan (MLA) Minister of Finance and Personnel, Northern Ireland Executive

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1 NATIONAL STATISTICS - AN INTRODUCTION

1.1 National Statistics will provide an accurate, up-to-date, comprehensive and meaningful description of the UK economy and society. They will be used by Government, Parliament and the wider community in decision-making and debate, and will offer a window on the work and performance of government itself. The initial scope is set out in a separate document published today. Essentially it includes all of the public access databases and publications produced by the Office for National Statistics and many of the key public interest statistics produced by other government departments. The coverage of National Statistics will evolve over time.

1.2 National Statistics include statistics produced by the devolved administrations. These administrations support the principles set out in this document and have agreed that work on National Statistics within their administrations will be done within this Framework and within the context of the Memorandum of Understanding and the associated Concordat on Statistics between the UK government and the devolved administrations. Details of responsibilities for National Statistics within the devolved administrations are described in Chapters 5 to 7.

1.3 Responsibility for the professional quality of National Statistics rests with the National Statistician. They will be produced within the framework outlined in this document, and to the professional standards set out in the National Statistics Code of Practice. National Statistics can be readily identified by the National Statistics logo.

1.4 This Framework Document directs and guides the development of National Statistics. It establishes its status and governance. It sets out:

- the responsibilities of the Minister for National Statistics and the responsibilities of other Ministers whose departments contribute to National Statistics. The responsibilities of Ministers in the devolved administrations are set out in Chapters 5 to 7;
- the role and responsibilities of the independent Statistics Commission; and
- the role and responsibilities of the National Statistician and statistical Heads of Profession across the UK government as producers of National Statistics. The role and responsibilities of the statistical Heads of Profession in the devolved administrations are set out in Chapters 5 to 7.

2 FRAMEWORK - STATUS AND GOVERNANCE

2.1 The Framework for National Statistics provides the status and governance framework for official statistics in the United Kingdom. It describes the roles of the key players who will direct and guide the work leading to the production of National Statistics.

2.2 The **Statistics Commission** is independent of both Ministers and the producers of National Statistics. It has its own budget and is able to commission its own activities; the Chancellor, as Minister for National Statistics appoints the chairman and members in accordance with the Code of Practice published by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. The Commission produces an annual report, to be laid before Parliament by the Minister for National Statistics. It advises on the quality assurance and priority setting for National Statistics and on the procedures designed to deliver statistical integrity. It advises Ministers of areas of widespread concern about the quality of official statistics, so that Ministers can take these considerations into account in determining priorities and making decisions about National Statistics.

2.3 The **National Statistician** is both the professional Head of National Statistics and the Director of the Office for National Statistics. He/she has responsibility for the professional statistical quality of all outputs comprising National Statistics and ensuring that all outputs are produced in accordance with the standards set out in the National Statistics Code of Practice. He/she is accountable to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, as Minister for National Statistics, for the performance of National Statistics and, with Heads of Profession, for the discharge of the annual work plans approved by Ministers. When providing advice to departments, the National Statistician communicates with the appropriate departmental Minister through the Head of Department. The National Statistician has access to the Prime Minister, through the Head of the Home Civil Service, on matters concerning the integrity and validity of National Statistics.

2.4 **Heads of Profession**, in each relevant department, support the National Statistician. Heads of Profession are accountable to their departmental Ministers for the relevant parts of the approved work plans for National Statistics and are accountable to the National Statistician for the professional statistical quality of the National Statistics they produce.

2.5 This Framework Document for National Statistics has been written to complement and sit alongside the Framework Document for the Office for National Statistics, any separate framework document produced for the Statistics Commission, existing departmental structures and

arrangements put in place by the devolved administrations. These other documents are set specifically with an organisation or department in mind and provide, for example, appropriate authority for departmental planning and reporting, and financial management, or may cover functions that extend beyond official statistics, for example the Director of ONS's responsibilities as Registrar General for England and Wales. All work for National Statistics should be carried out within this Framework.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF NATIONAL STATISTICS

Aims 3.1 The Government and the devolved administrations are committed to enhancing the integrity, both actual and perceived, of National Statistics. The primary aim of National Statistics is to provide an accurate, up-to-date, comprehensive and meaningful picture of the economy and society to support the formulation and monitoring of economic and social policies by government at all levels. National Statistics also aims:

- To inform the Parliaments and Assemblies and the citizen about the state of the nation and provide a window on the work and performance of government, allowing the impact of government policies and actions to be assessed;
- To provide business with a statistical service which promotes the efficient functioning of commerce and industry;
- To provide researchers, analysts and other customers with a statistical service that assists their work and studies;
- To promote these aims within the UK, the European Union and internationally and to provide a statistical service to meet European Union and international requirements.

Objectives 3.2 The objectives of National Statistics in pursuit of these aims are:

- To improve the quality, timeliness and relevance of its service to customers both within government and the wider community;
- To improve public confidence in official statistics by demonstrating that they are produced to best professional standards and free from political interference;
- To operate efficiently by improving value for money in the production of its outputs and minimising the burden on those who supply it with data.

3.3 These aims and objectives will be taken forward within the resources made available. How this will be done is described below. The roles of the key players in doing this are described in the following section.

Improving Quality and Relevance

3.4 In order to ensure that National Statistics are relevant, accurate and focused on meeting the needs and aspirations of users generally, there is a

transparent planning framework and priority setting process for National Statistics. This includes:

- Producing a coherent, up-to-date, high level programme for National Statistics that reflects the needs of users and which brings together the key elements of statistical work programmes across Government. The Statistics Commission will consider and comment to Ministers on an annual work programme prepared by the National Statistician with the support of statistics Heads of Profession. In doing so, it will draw on the views of users and suppliers and is required to maintain effective consultation arrangements to this end. In determining departmental statistics work programmes Ministers will have regard to the views of the Statistics Commission and needs of users, departmental and cross-government priorities, compliance costs of data collection, and international commitments. All parties will play their parts in this process with regard to the available resources for National Statistics.
- Establishing clear quality assurance processes for National Statistics. The National Statistician will establish a quality assurance programme including thorough reviews of key outputs at least every five years with the involvement of external expertise. The Statistics Commission will comment on the quality assurance processes and will advise the National Statistician of any areas of concern that merit review: if necessary it may commission its own audits.
- Developing and maintaining statistical standards, definitions and classifications and promoting high quality statistical output through systematic evaluation and research. The National Statistician will be responsible for these arrangements except in the case of the Retail Prices Index where special arrangements apply: the National Statistician will take the lead in advising on methodological questions concerning the RPI but the scope and definition of the index will continue to be matters for the Chancellor of the Exchequer.
- Maintaining a transparent mechanism for taking into account the views of users and providers of data in the priority setting process. The National Statistician will be responsible for establishing and maintaining appropriate consultation arrangements: the Statistics Commission will have access to the information so garnered from users and providers and will establish their own supplementary consultation arrangements.
- Keeping under review the scope of National Statistics: the initial scope of National Statistics is set out in a document published today. Ministers will take decisions about the coverage of

National Statistics in the light of the costs and benefits involved. To help this process, the Statistics Commission will advise Ministers of any widespread concerns about the quality of official statistics.

Improving Public Confidence in National Statistics

3.5 Not only must National Statistics be produced and presented without political interference but, in addition, this must be clearly apparent to users. This will be achieved by:

- Developing and maintaining a professional Code of Practice including policy for the release of National Statistics and policy on the handling of, and access to, data within government. The National Statistician is responsible for preparing the Code of Practice and, as necessary, resolving any issues concerning interpretation of the Code. Ministers are responsible for ensuring that statistics Heads of Profession have the authority to maintain and demonstrate the integrity of National Statistics in accordance with the Code.
- The National Statistician having a right of access to the Prime Minister, and First Ministers in devolved administrations, on issues of professional integrity including on resources where they impact on the integrity of National Statistics.
- If they wish, in the context of devolution, Parliaments and Assemblies setting up arrangements for enhanced scrutiny of National Statistics. This could cover both aspects of statistical integrity, quality and freedom from political interference.

Operate Efficiently

3.6 National Statistics need to be produced efficiently in order to maximise the benefits from the available resources. This will be achieved by:

- setting challenging and explicit efficiency targets, and seeking always to achieve them;
- taking advantage of technological developments to reduce costs of collection, processing and dissemination;
- making effective use of existing data sources including existing administrative sources;
- providing guidance in the National Statistics Code of Practice on ways efficiency can be optimised, and reporting on efficiency improvements in the annual report on National Statistics.

3.7 Responding to statistical enquiries also imposes a burden that suppliers legitimately expect to be kept to a minimum, consistent with the government's requirements for reliable statistics. Such compliance costs will be contained by:

- Making use of existing data sources wherever cost effective and practicable;
- Collecting statistics using administrative data where possible and controlling the use of censuses and statistical surveys to minimise the burden on data suppliers;
- Taking advantage of technological developments to reduce costs to suppliers of data collection; and
- Maintaining a compliance plan of the costs of statistical data collection to businesses and local authorities.

3.8 The National Statistician will be responsible for estimating the compliance costs to businesses and local authorities of responding to statistical enquiries and minimising those costs. The Statistics Commission is required to have regard both to efficiency and to the need to keep compliance costs to a minimum when commenting on the annual work programme for National Statistics.

4 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 RESPONSIBILITIES OF MINISTERS

Minister for National Statistics

4.1.1 The Chancellor, as Minister for National Statistics, will be responsible for co-ordination across National Statistics.

4.1.2 The Minister for National Statistics will appoint the chairman and members of the Statistics Commission in accordance with the Code of Practice of the Commissioner for Public Appointments, and set resources for the Commission taking account of the Commission's views.

4.1.3 The Minister will, with the agreement of the Prime Minister and normally following open competition, appoint a National Statistician.

4.1.4 The Minister is responsible for maintenance and development of the co-ordinating structure for National Statistics in the UK, including the Framework for National Statistics. In doing so, the Minister will take account of the international context, including the UN fundamental principles for official statistics. The Minister will consult departmental Ministers, Ministers in the devolved administrations, the Statistics Commission and the National Statistician on proposed changes to the co-ordinating structure for National Statistics.

4.1.5 The Minister will produce and publish a co-ordinated response to the Statistics Commission's views and lay before Parliament the annual reports produced by the Commission and the National Statistician.

4.1.6 Where there is no clear departmental responsibility for cross-departmental statistical issues, the Minister is accountable to Parliament for such issues.

Departmental Ministers

4.1.7 Departmental Ministers, including the Minister responsible for ONS,

Improving Quality and Relevance of National Statistics

(a) are accountable for the statistical activities of their department and for the resources allocated to it, but will not normally become involved in the operational aspects of statistical work;

(b) determine the policy and resources framework within which the statistical work in their Department operates and set performance targets for National Statistics;

(c) decide the scope of National Statistics and departmental statistical programmes and resources having regard to the comments of the Statistics Commission on the proposed National Statistics programme;

Improving Public Confidence in National Statistics

(d) contribute to the response co-ordinated by the Minister for National Statistics to views expressed by the Commission on departmental elements of the high level programme for National Statistics and on specific issues related to the statistical work in their departments;

(e) ensure that their Department operates in accordance with this Framework for National Statistics and that National Statistics produced by their department are free from political interference;

(f) ensure that their Head of Profession has the authority to maintain and demonstrate the integrity of their output in accordance with the National Statistics Code of Practice;

(g) determine which individuals should have access to National Statistics produced by their Department in advance of their release, having first consulted the National Statistician;

Operate Efficiently

(h) set challenging efficiency standards;

(i) approve compliance plans and survey programmes after having assured themselves that the surveys included in the plans are justified and properly controlled;

Co-ordination across Government

(j) co-ordinate responses to the Commission on cross-departmental statistical issues where their department has a clear responsibility for such co-ordination;

(k) authorise Heads of Profession for statistics and their staff to make a full professional contribution to National Statistics activities and authorise access to all data within their control for statistical purposes across government subject to confidentiality considerations and statutory requirements;

Devolution

(l) within the context of the Memorandum of Understanding and the associated Statistics Concordat, provide the devolved administrations with as full and open as possible access to statistics, and will work to promote comparable statistics across the UK.

4.2 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STATISTICS COMMISSION

4.2.1 The Statistics Commission will play a key role in advising on the quality, quality assurance and priority setting for National Statistics, and on the procedures designed to deliver statistical integrity, to help ensure National Statistics are trustworthy and responsive to public needs. It will be independent of both Ministers and the producers of National Statistics. It will operate in a transparent way with the minutes of its meetings, correspondence and evidence it receives, and advice it gives, all normally being publicly available for scrutiny.

Appointment and terms

4.2.2 Members will be appointed by the Chancellor, as Minister for National Statistics, in accordance with the Code of Practice published by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. Appointment will take into account the need for the Commission to be independent, command authority, reflect the views of users and information providers of National Statistics and demonstrate a good understanding of statistical issues and the value of trustworthy statistics in democratic debate. The members need not be professional statisticians. Initial appointments will usually be for three years although terms of different lengths may be offered to ensure continuity. Any subsequent re-appointments may be offered in line with prevailing guidance issued by the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

Functions

4.2.3 The main function of the Statistics Commission is to give independent, reliable and relevant advice on National Statistics to Ministers and, by so doing, to provide an additional safeguard on the quality and integrity of National Statistics. In discharging its responsibilities, a key requirement will be to establish itself as a source of high quality and independent advice on statistical issues. Its advice will be made available to the wider public who must be able to rely on it as both considered and impartial.

4.2.4 The Statistics Commission is independent and, as such, has freedom in the way it operates, subject to the requirements laid down in this Framework Document and any framework document specific to the Commission. This includes flexibility to determine how it spends its resources, and how it selects and deploys its secretariat.

4.2.5 The Statistics Commission will ensure that satisfactory systems are in place for the effective delivery of its role in monitoring and advising on the quality and integrity of National Statistics. It will operate in a transparent and open way - making its operations publicly available for scrutiny. It will be responsible for the use of its resources. In conducting its work programme it will:

Improving Quality and Relevance of National Statistics

- (a) ensure that it is able to assess the needs of users;
- (b) consider and comment to Ministers on the high-level programme for National Statistics, drawing on the views of users and suppliers, taking account of:
 - i) the resources available for National Statistics;
 - (ii) the compliance costs of providers of raw data; and
 - (iii) the management needs of organisations required to supply raw data. Proposals by the Commission for modification of the National Statistics programme will be accompanied by a compliance cost assessment;
- (c) advise Ministers of areas of widespread concern about the quality of official statistics, so that Ministers can take these considerations into account in determining priorities and making decisions about National Statistics;

Improving Public Confidence in National Statistics

- (d) comment on the application of the National Statistics Code of Practice and other procedures designed to promote statistical integrity;
- (e) comment, as necessary, on the arrangements for promoting professional standards across all official statistical work;
- (f) comment on the quality assurance processes of National Statistics, as well as being able to carry out spot checks on departmental or other audits of National Statistics, to advise the National Statistician of any areas of concern that merit review and if necessary to carry out or commission its own audits;
- (g) respond to ad hoc requests from the Minister for National Statistics for advice on any matters related to National Statistics subject to resource constraints;
- (h) review the need for statistical legislation after two years and report back to the Minister for National Statistics, and keep the legislative framework under review thereafter;

Operate Efficiently

- (i) take account of compliance costs of responding to statistical enquiries and the need to secure value for money when commenting on the proposed annual statistical work programme;

Co-ordination with Government

(j) secure effective communication channels between the Commission and the Minister for National Statistics, and between the Commission and the National Statistician;

Devolution

(k) advise Ministers on the effectiveness of the arrangements to ensure the consistency and co-ordination of statistics on a UK-wide basis following devolution, as appropriate, and establish working relationships with devolved administrations as it, and they, see fit.

Performance Reporting

(l) submit an annual report to the Minister for National Statistics commenting on the annual report of the National Statistician and on the way the Commission has fulfilled its remit.

4.3 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE NATIONAL STATISTICIAN

4.3.1 The National Statistician is the Head of National Statistics and Director of the Office for National Statistics. The National Statistician is the UK Government's chief professional adviser on statistical matters.

Appointment and terms

4.3.2 The National Statistician will be appointed by the Minister for National Statistics, with the agreement of the Prime Minister, normally following open competition. He/she will hold office as a civil servant under such terms and conditions as are determined by the Head of the Home Civil Service.

Head of National Statistics

4.3.3 The National Statistician has responsibility for the professional quality of the outputs comprising National Statistics. She or he will maintain and publish a National Statistics Code of Practice to assist this end. In fulfilling this role, he or she will work closely with Heads of Profession for Statistics in Departments and will take account of the views of users. The National Statistician will be responsible for ensuring that the Chancellor of the Exchequer, as Minister for National Statistics, and Departmental Ministers are consulted on proposals that impinge on matters of government policy.

4.3.4 The National Statistician as *Head of National Statistics*, and in consultation with statistics Heads of Profession in departments, has the following functions on an UK basis. He or she will:

Improving Quality and Relevance of National Statistics

- (a) establish the planning framework for National Statistics and the appropriate National Statistics committee structure for delivering planning and management functions, and make appointments to these committees;
- (b) produce a coherent high-level programme for National Statistics that reflects the needs of users and which brings together the key elements of statistical work programmes across government, and present this programme to the Statistics Commission;
- (c) establish quality assurance processes for National Statistics including a programme of thorough reviews of key outputs at least every five years with the involvement of external expertise;
- (d) be responsible for definitions and methodology of National Statistics within the framework of international agreements and conventions, and within the restrictions of administrative systems. In the case of the RPI special arrangements apply: the National Statistician will take the lead in advising on methodological questions concerning the RPI but the scope

and definition of the index will continue to be matters for the Chancellor of the Exchequer;

(e) establish and maintain mechanisms for taking into account the views of users and providers of data in the priority setting process;

(f) as appropriate will establish advisory committees and make appointments to them;

(g) promote high quality statistical outputs through systematic evaluation and research, and facilitate access to those outputs;

Improving Public Confidence in National Statistics

(h) promote the integrity and validity of National Statistics, understanding of statistical issues, and the use and interpretation of statistics;

(i) develop and maintain a professional code of practice for producers of National Statistics and, as necessary, resolve any issues concerning interpretation of the code of practice;

(j) within the framework of departmental statistical work programmes, and the agreed broad coverage of departmental outputs, have responsibility for the professional integrity of those outputs comprising National Statistics, including responsibility for the timing of their release, and for the content and format of that release, taking into account the views of users;

(k) set professional standards for National Statistics, including standards for release arrangements and quality assessment, and has the authority to determine whether or not a statistical output meets those standards;

(l) have the right of access to the Prime Minister, through the Head of the Home Civil Service, on matters concerning the integrity and validity of official statistics including on resources where he/she believes they impact on the integrity and validity of official statistics;

Operate Efficiently

(m) provide guidance in the National Statistics Code of Practice on ways efficiency can be optimised, and report on efficiency improvements in the annual report on National Statistics;

(n) estimate the compliance costs to businesses and local authorities of responding to statistical enquiries and seek to minimise the burdens on those who supply data for National Statistics or other statistical purposes;

International Responsibilities

(o) promote EU/international co-operation on statistical matters and ensure an effective contribution is made to international statistical developments including work on definitions and methodology;

(p) have responsibility to fulfil UK statistical obligations to the European Union and international bodies;

Co-ordination across Government

(q) act as Head of the Government Statistical Service and be responsible for maintaining central personnel and staff development functions to ensure the availability of skilled professional statisticians across government, and promote the application of the National Statistics Code of Practice for all statistical work in government;

(r) facilitate and promote the development of statistical methodologies, classifications and standards, and information systems;

(s) facilitate and promote dissemination and marketing arrangements for National Statistics;

(t) resolve interdepartmental disputes over issues of statistical integrity or methodology;

(u) make available to the Statistics Commission information required by the Commission to perform its duties;

Devolution

(v) work with Heads of Profession in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, to meet users' needs and to promote comparable statistics across the UK - in particular, this will be essential for statistics required to be submitted on a UK basis to the EU or international bodies;

(w) work with Heads of Profession across the UK to ensure effective sharing of statistical information between the UK government and the devolved administrations in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding and the associated Concordat on Statistics;

Performance Reporting

(x) prepare an annual report on the performance of National Statistics to the Chancellor, as Minister for National Statistics;

(y) appear before Parliamentary Committees as requested to answer questions about National Statistics and respond openly and honestly on all professional statistical matters.

4.4 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE HEADS OF PROFESSION FOR STATISTICS

4.4.1 Where a department produces National Statistics, or widely uses official statistics, or where it has a group of official statisticians, there shall be a designated Head of Profession for Statistics (referred to as the “Head of Profession”). Heads of Profession will be designated by Heads of Department. The Head of Department will do so after seeking the views of the National Statistician. The National Statistician will be Head of Profession for Statistics for ONS.

Functions

4.4.2 Heads of Profession will be responsible for the professional integrity of National Statistics produced by their departments. In discharging their responsibilities, the Heads of Profession will work closely with the National Statistician as Head of National Statistics and overall Head of Profession for statistics across Government. Heads of Profession are responsible to the National Statistician for the professional quality of their work. They will collaborate with the National Statistician in his/her professional responsibilities while remaining in the formal line management of their departments. Where aspects of a Head of Profession’s responsibilities extend to other bodies or parts of his or her department, this should be documented by that Head of Profession as part of the job description.

4.4.3 Heads of Profession will:

Improving Quality and Relevance of National Statistics

- (a) prepare the statistical work programmes for their Departments in consultation with the National Statistician and support the National Statistician in devising and delivering a coherent programme for National Statistics;
- (b) have responsibility for co-ordinating their departmental statistical programmes and promoting within the department the implementation of National Statistics policies;
- (c) promote the use of statistical information and advice in departmental decision-making;
- (d) support user consultation and take account of users’ views;
- (e) implement quality assurance processes for National Statistics produced by their Department, including thorough and timely reviews of key outputs, with the involvement of external expertise.

Improving Public Confidence in National Statistics

- (f) observe the National Statistics Code of Practice and other standards for National Statistics and promote their use in departments;
- (g) have a responsibility to the National Statistician for the professional quality of their work;
- (h) advise on and promote best practice in statistical work throughout their departments and, with the National Statistician, safeguard the integrity of, and public confidence in, the statistical work and all National Statistics produced in their departments;
- (i) promote the professional independence of the department's statistical work, the propriety and impartiality of its decisions, the quality of its outputs and the integrity and validity of its statistics and commentaries;
- (j) have a duty to refer matters related to the professional integrity of National Statistics produced by their departments to the National Statistician and, with the National Statistician's help where appropriate, to address these;
- (k) protect the confidentiality of people and organisations from the unauthorised disclosure of information held about them by their departments for National Statistics or other statistical purposes;

Operate Efficiently

- (l) have responsibility for meeting the service, quality and efficiency standards set by Ministers;
- (m) estimate the compliance costs to businesses and local authorities of responding to statistical enquiries and seek to minimise the burdens on those who supply data to their departments for National Statistics or other statistical purposes;
- (n) promote the use of departmental administrative systems for statistical purposes, and pursue these within a National Statistics context;

Co-ordination across Government

- (o) ensure an appropriate departmental input to the development of policy and strategy on National Statistics by participating in interdepartmental committees and working groups, and by encouraging others in their departments to do so;

(p) advise on the recruitment, training and development, posting, appraisal, promotion and retention of statistical staff in the department; and serve on or otherwise ensuring appropriate representation on, all recruitment, promotion and other boards for statistical staff;

(q) facilitate and promote dissemination and marketing arrangements for National Statistics;

Devolution

(r) work with the National Statistician and other Heads of Profession to promote comparable statistics across the UK;

Performance Reporting

(s) contribute to the annual report on the performance of National Statistics prepared by the National Statistician.

5 THE NATIONAL STATISTICS FRAMEWORK IN THE SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

5.1 The Scottish Executive shares the aims and objectives of National Statistics and has agreed that statistics by or for the Executive will be included. The UK and devolved administrations will work in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding and Concordat on Statistics to ensure the availability of UK statistics, to ensure that the statistical needs of devolved areas are met and allow comparisons to be made. Adopting the common approach to National Statistics will help to meet these aims. It will also result in a continuation of the benefits to all the administrations through co-operation and sharing of practice within the Government Statistical Service.

5.2 References to statistics, functions and structures in the Scottish Executive in this section should be taken to include General Register Office for Scotland as part of the Scottish administration, and statistics produced for the Executive as detailed in a separate document setting out the scope of National Statistics in Scotland.

5.3 If it wishes the Scottish Parliament may set up arrangements for scrutiny of National Statistics in the Scottish Executive. As with the UK Parliament this could cover aspects of statistical integrity, quality and freedom from political interference. It could also include access to Annual Reports on National Statistics and responses to the Commission's comments.

Responsibilities of Ministers

5.4 Within the Scottish Executive, the Minister for Finance will be responsible for co-ordination of National Statistics, and for the maintenance and development of the co-ordinating structure of National Statistics, including the provisions of this section of the Framework. The Minister will work with, and agree action with, the UK Minister for National Statistics in line with the Memorandum of Understanding. The Minister will produce a co-ordinated response to the Statistics Commission's views on matters relating to the Scottish Executive and make this available to the Minister for National Statistics and to the Scottish Parliament if it wishes.

5.5 Departmental Ministers in Scotland will have responsibilities equivalent to those of UK departmental Ministers (summarised in

Responsibilities of the Statistics Commission

Section 4.1.7).

5.6 This will require further discussion once the Commission has been established. At this stage the view of the Scottish Executive is that the Commission should work in relation to Scottish Executive and Parliament in broadly the same way as it does in relation to the UK Government and Parliament.

5.7 It is also the view of the Executive that specific arrangements in Scotland will need to be considered to ensure that Scottish users' and providers' interests are reflected. This will be a matter which the Executive will discuss with the Commission, and on which the Executive will consult users and providers of statistics. The opportunity will exist for the Commission to make use of the consultation arrangements that the Scottish Executive puts in place.

5.8 The National Statistician has overall responsibility for a range of professional matters set out in Section 4.3.4 that are carried out in consultation with Heads of Profession in Scotland as with Heads of Profession in UK departments. In particular the National Statistician will work with Heads of Profession across the UK to ensure that they contribute to meeting the needs of all of the UK and devolved administrations in line with the Concordat on statistics. In addition the National Statistician will have the right of access to the First Minister, through the Permanent Secretary, on matters concerning the integrity and validity of official statistics in the Scottish Executive including on resources where he/she believes they impact on the integrity and validity of official statistics.

Responsibilities of the Chief Statistician in the Scottish Executive

5.9 The Chief Statistician in the Scottish Executive will carry out a number of functions similar to the National Statistician, but at Scottish level, in addition to those as Head of Profession. These functions will ensure that there is a consistent approach across National Statistics in the Scottish Executive, that a coherent view is presented to Scottish Ministers and users and that there is a co-ordinated approach towards both the contribution and requirements of Scottish Executive statistics within the UK. The National Statistician will be able to draw on these arrangements.

5.10 In respect of National Statistics produced by or for the Scottish Executive, the Chief Statistician in consultation with the National Statistician and Heads of Profession will:

(a) establish the planning framework for National Statistics in the Scottish Executive;

(b) produce a Scottish Statistics plan, consistent with and co-ordinated with the UK plan, that reflects the needs of users and which brings together the key elements of statistical work programmes across the

Executive. This Plan will be made available to the Statistics Commission;

(c) co-ordinate and promote implementation of National Statistics policies and procedures within the Scottish Executive;

(d) establish and maintain mechanisms for taking into account the views of users and providers of data. Where providers of data also supply UK departments appropriate liaison arrangements with the National Statistician will be put in place;

(e) promote and ensure adherence to the National Statistics Code of Practice and other standards for National Statistics; and, as necessary, resolve any issues concerning interpretation of the Code of Practice in the Scottish Executive;

(f) estimate the compliance costs to businesses and local authorities of responding to statistical enquiries and minimise the burdens on those who supply data for National Statistics;

(g) within the UK framework, promote EU/international co-operation on statistical matters and ensure an effective contribution is made to international statistical developments;

(h) maintain central personnel and staff development functions for statistical staff within the Scottish Executive /GROS and by agreement other agencies, to ensure the availability of skilled professional statisticians;

(i) facilitate and promote dissemination and marketing arrangements for National Statistics in the Scottish Executive;

(j) promote effective working between departments and agencies and resolve interdepartmental disputes over issues of statistical integrity and methodology;

(k) make available to the Statistics Commission any information it requires to perform its duties;

(l) work with the National Statistician and counterparts in Wales and Northern Ireland to promote comparable statistics across the UK and to maintain statistics required to be submitted on a UK basis to the EU and international bodies;

(m) prepare an annual report on the performance of National Statistics to the Minister for Finance, which will be made publicly available

Responsibilities of Heads of Profession

5.11 Unless otherwise specified the Chief Statistician will be Head of Profession for departments of the Scottish Executive and maintain appropriate arrangements to involve statistical staff and their managers in these departments.

5.12 Where appropriate, other Heads of Profession in the Scottish Executive and associated departments/ agencies will be designated by the Head of Department after seeking the views of the National Statistician and, where appropriate, the Chief Statistician. Heads of Profession for National Statistics in the Scottish Executive will have the same responsibilities as Heads of Profession in UK departments as set out in Section 4.4 of this Framework. In addition they will work with the Chief

Statistician to enable his or her functions to be carried out.

6 THE NATIONAL STATISTICS FRAMEWORK IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FOR WALES

Responsibilities of Assembly Secretaries

6.1 The National Assembly for Wales shares the aims and objectives of National Statistics. The UK and devolved administrations will work in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding and Concordat on Statistics to ensure the availability of UK statistics, to ensure that the statistical needs of devolved administrations are met and to allow comparisons to be made. Adopting a common approach to National Statistics will help to meet these aims. It will also result in a continuation of the benefits to all the administrations through co-operation and sharing of practice within the Government Statistical Service.

6.2 Within the National Assembly, the Finance Secretary will be responsible for co-ordination of National Statistics and for the maintenance and development of the co-ordinating structure, including the provisions of this chapter of the Framework. The Finance Secretary will work with, and agree action with, the UK Minister for National Statistics in line with the Memorandum of Understanding.

6.3 The Finance Secretary will produce a co-ordinated response to the Statistics Commission's views on matters relating to the National Assembly and make this available to the Minister for National Statistics.

Responsibilities of the Statistics Commission

6.4 Other Assembly Secretaries will have responsibilities equivalent to those of UK departmental Ministers (summarised in Section 4.1.7).

6.5 The responsibilities of the Statistics Commission in relation to the National Assembly will be agreed with the Commission once it has been established.

Responsibilities of the National Statistician

6.6 At this stage it is assumed that the Commission will work in relation to the National Assembly for Wales in broadly the same way as it does in relation to the UK Government and Parliament.

6.7 The National Statistician has overall responsibility for a range of professional matters (set out in Section 4.3.4). The National Statistician will work with Heads of Profession across the UK to ensure that they contribute to meeting the needs of all of the UK and devolved

**Responsibilities
of the Chief
Statistician in
the National
Assembly**

administrations in line with the Concordat on statistics. In addition the National Statistician will have the right of access to the First Secretary of the National Assembly through the Permanent Secretary, on matters concerning the integrity and validity of official statistics in the Welsh Assembly including on resources where he/she believes they impact on the integrity and validity of official statistics.

6.8 In respect of National Statistics produced by or for the National Assembly, the Chief Statistician in the National Assembly, in consultation with the National Statistician, will:

- (a) establish and maintain the planning framework for National Statistics in the National Assembly;
- (b) produce an annual Assembly Statistics Plan, consistent with the UK plan, that reflects the needs of users and brings together the statistical work programmes within the Assembly. This Plan will be made available openly and will include a full report on performance against previous plans;
- (c) co-ordinate and promote National Statistics policies and procedures within the National Assembly;
- (d) establish and maintain mechanisms for taking account of the views of users and providers of data;
- (e) promote and ensure adherence to the National Statistics Code of Practice and other standards for National Statistics; and seek to resolve any issues concerning interpretation of the Code of Practice in the National Assembly;
- (f) estimate the compliance costs to business and local authorities of responding to statistical enquiries and seek to minimise the burdens on those who supply data for National Statistics or other purposes;
- (g) within the UK framework, promote EU/international co-operation on statistical matters and ensure an effective contribution is made to international statistical developments;
- (h) maintain central personnel and staff development functions for statistical staff within the National Assembly, to ensure the availability of skilled professional statisticians;
- (i) manage dissemination and marketing arrangements for National Statistics;
- (j) make available to the Statistics Commission any information it requires to perform its duties;
- (k) work with the National Statistician and counterparts in Scotland and Northern Ireland to promote comparable statistics across the UK and to maintain statistics required to be submitted on a UK basis to the EU and international bodies.

7 THE NATIONAL STATISTICS FRAMEWORK IN NORTHERN IRELAND (NI)

Responsibilities of Ministers

7.1 The Northern Ireland Executive is committed to bringing relevant official statistics within the scope of the new arrangements. While statisticians working in Northern Ireland are not formally part of the Government Statistical Service, the NI Statistics and Research Agency, NI Departments and the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) work closely with the Office for National Statistics and other GB Departments to ensure that common standards apply to the production of statistics throughout the UK. Responsibility for statistical outputs in relation to policy areas which are devolved rests with Ministers in the Northern Ireland Assembly. The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland is responsible for National Statistics produced by the Northern Ireland Office.

7.2 The Minister for the Department of Finance and Personnel in the Northern Ireland Executive will be formally responsible for the co-ordination of National Statistics in Northern Ireland Departments, including the provisions of this section of the Framework. The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland will exercise similar responsibilities for the Northern Ireland Office.

7.3 The Minister for the Department of Finance and Personnel will produce a co-ordinated response to the Statistics Commission's views on matters relating to official statistics produced by Northern Ireland Departments and make this available to the Minister for National Statistics.

Responsibilities of the Statistics Commission

7.4 Other Ministers will have responsibilities broadly analogous to those of UK Departmental Ministers (summarised in Section 4.1.7).

Responsibilities of the National Statistician

7.5 It will be for the Northern Ireland Executive and Assembly to establish working relationships with the Statistics Commission as appropriate. The working assumption is that the Commission will relate to the NI Assembly and Executive in a similar way as it does with the UK Government and Parliament.

7.6 The National Statistician has overall responsibility for a range of professional matters (set out in Section 4.3.4).

**Responsibilities of
the Chief Executive
of the Northern
Ireland Statistics
and Research
Agency (NISRA)**

7.7 The National Statistician will work with Heads of Profession across the UK to ensure that they contribute to meeting the needs of all of the UK and devolved administrations in line with the Concordat on Statistics. In addition, the National Statistician will have right of access to the First Minister and Deputy First Minister through the Secretary to the NI Executive on matters concerning the integrity and validity of official statistics, including resources where he/she believes they impact on the integrity and validity of official statistics. The National Statistician will have similar right of access to the Secretary of State through the Permanent Under Secretary at the NIO in relation to official statistics on reserved matters.

7.8 For National Statistics produced by or for the Northern Ireland administration, the NISRA Chief Executive will carry out a number of functions similar to the National Statistician, but at the Northern Ireland level*. He/she will, by agreement with the NIO, and in consultation with NI Departments and, where appropriate with the National Statistician:

- (a) establish and maintain the planning Framework for National Statistics for Northern Ireland;
- (b) keep under review the organisation of statistical functions consistent with the objectives of National Statistics;
- (c) produce an annual NI Statistics Plan consistent with the UK Plan, that reflects the needs of users and brings together statistical work programmes across NI Departments;
- (d) co-ordinate and promote National Statistics policies and procedures within NI;
- (e) maintain central responsibility for the development and deployment of statistical staff within NI;
- (f) establish and maintain mechanisms for taking account of the views of users and providers of data;
- (g) promote and ensure adherence to the National Statistics Code of Practice and other standards for National Statistics; and seek to resolve any issues concerning interpretation of the Code of Practice in NI;
- (h) estimate the compliance costs to business and local authorities of responding to statistical enquiries and seek to minimise the burdens on those who supply data for National Statistics or other purposes;

** The arrangements are slightly different in respect of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development where professional responsibility is exercised by the Chief Agricultural Economist.*

- (i) within the UK framework, promote EU/international co-operation on statistical matters;
- (j) manage dissemination and marketing arrangements for National Statistics;
- (k) make available to the Statistics Commission such Information as it requires to perform its duties;
- (l) work with the National Statistician and counterparts in Scotland and Wales to promote comparable statistics across the UK and to maintain statistics required to be submitted on a UK basis to the EU and international bodies.

8 REVIEW AND PUBLICATION

8.1 The Framework for National Statistics will be reviewed in five years.

8.2 The Minister for National Statistics after consultation with, or at the behest of, the National Statistician may also make amendments, or issue supplementary directions or guidance, when necessary. Before doing so the Minister will seek the views of the Statistics Commission and will consult UK Government Ministers and Ministers in devolved administrations in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding. Any such changes will be made public and will be highlighted in the public annual report made by the National Statistician.

8.3 Copies of this Framework for National Statistics, and any subsequent amendments or supplements, will be placed in the Libraries of the Houses of Parliament.

8.4 For further information about this Framework contact:

Jon McGinty
National Statistics and Policy Division
D4/12
Office for National Statistics
1 Drummond Gate
London
SW1V 2QQ
Tel: 020 7533 6210
E-mail: jon.mcginty@ons.gov.uk

8.5 For further copies of this document please contact:

National Statistics Information and Library Service
Office for National Statistics
Cardiff Road
Newport, South Wales
NP10 8XG
Tel: 020 7533 5888
E-mail: info@statistics.gov.uk

