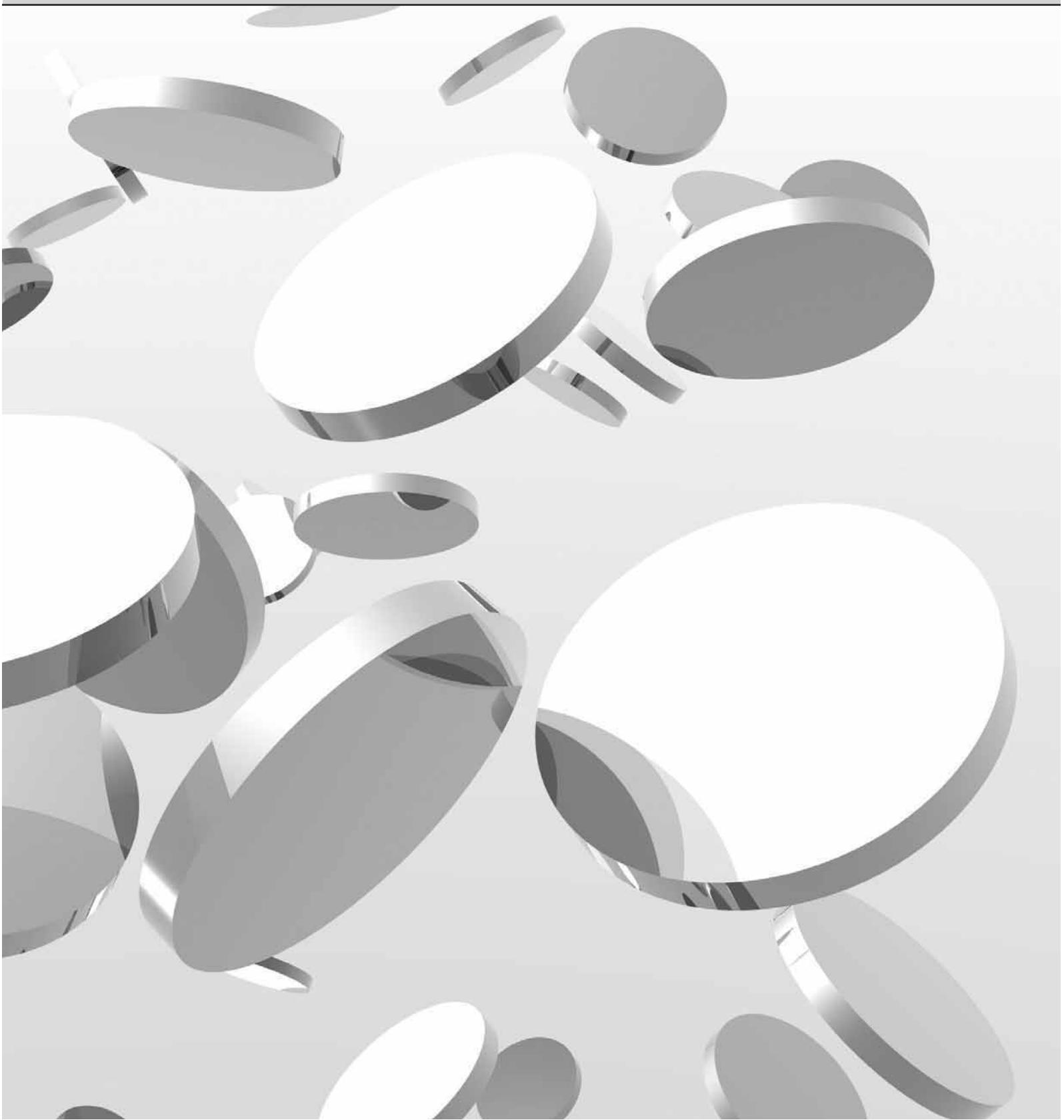


Office for National Statistics  
Departmental Report 2005



This is part of a series of departmental reports (Cm 6521 to Cm 6548) which, along with the Main Estimates, the document Public Expenditure: Statistical Analyses 2005, and the Supply Estimates 2005-06: Supplementary Budgetary Information, present the Government's expenditure plans for 2005-2008.

The complete series of Departmental Reports and Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses 2005 is also available as a set at a discounted price.



Office for National Statistics

## SPRING 2005 DEPARTMENTAL REPORT

Presented to Parliament  
by the Chancellor of the Exchequer  
and the  
Chief Secretary to the Treasury  
by Command of Her Majesty  
June 2005

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**Office for National Statistics**  
Spring 2005 Departmental Report

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# Introduction

1. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) was established as an Executive Agency and Government Department on 1 April 1996, from the merger of the Central Statistical Office and the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys. It has around 5,500 staff operating in London, Newport (Gwent), Southport and Titchfield (Hampshire) of whom 1,410 are interviewers whose role is to collect information for our social surveys (these figures are full headcount – see Annex A Staff in Post table for full time equivalent figures).
2. The Director and Permanent Secretary of ONS is Len Cook. He is also the National Statistician (the Government’s Chief Statistical Adviser and professional Head of National Statistics), the Registrar General for England and Wales and the Accounting Officer.
3. The ONS Framework Document sets the scope of the Office’s activity and its relationship with Ministers. The Director of ONS is accountable to the Chancellor of the Exchequer for the Department’s performance. The Chancellor currently delegates Ministerial responsibility for ONS to the Financial Secretary to the Treasury. The ONS aims and objectives are listed in the next section of this report.
4. The National Statistics Framework Document sets out the arrangements and responsibilities for National Statistics and describes the framework that regulates much of the Government’s statistical work. The National Statistician is responsible for the methods and quality of National Statistics and for maintaining the standards set out in the National Statistics Code of Practice and supporting Protocols.
5. ONS works in partnership with other departments through the Government Statistical Service (GSS) to provide Parliament, government and the wider community with a wide range of statistical information, analysis and advice.
6. The Statistics Commission was established by the Government to give relevant advice to Ministers on the quality, quality assurance, priority setting and on the procedures designed to deliver statistical integrity that ensure National Statistics are trustworthy and responsive to public needs. It is an independent body and this report does not cover its activities.
7. The Registrar General for England and Wales is responsible for the delivery of Civil Registration in England and Wales. In practice he ensures that ONS works in partnership with Local Authorities to administer the registration of key life events. The two distinct roles of ONS come together where statistical information can be derived from civil registration for use in policy making, allocation of resources and monitoring the health of the nation.

# Aims and Objectives

## 8. ONS Mission:

- to provide trustworthy official statistics and an efficient registration service, which enable timely and decisive government, business and community activities. All statistics prepared by ONS will be accessible and users will be able to make enquiries and studies of ONS surveys (in controlled situations).

## 9. Strategic objectives:

- to be an authoritative and trusted publisher of statistics about the UK economy and society;
- to ensure the efficient and accurate registration of key life events;
- to contribute to the leadership of the statistical system of the European Union and ensure that engagement in international statistics is effective in the breadth of issues important to the UK.

Particularly during this period of transformation, the key to achieving these objectives will be the efforts and commitment shown by our staff. Our goal is to sustain throughout the whole period, the development and motivation and recruitment of staff who understand the community we serve, and have the skills to take maximum advantage of the new technological environment we are building.

## 10. Across all official statistics we will:

- ensure that all official statistics, valuable to understanding of matters of public concern or interest, are produced and reported on, independently of the Government of the day;

- underpin the trustworthiness of ONS by our commitment to confidentiality protection, the impartiality of reporting, and of objectivity of methods. In these areas there will be no doubts as to our standards, our statistical conformance with them, and our capacity for constant reassurance.

## 11. We will have achieved our goals when we can demonstrate our effectiveness through:

- producing statistics which are recognised and valued, at home, by all parts of the UK community, and abroad, for integrity, relevance and validity;
- having systems, practices, policies and methods that are adopted by other statistical offices, making us a leading influence on world-wide statistical developments;
- developing research, analysis and methods through international exchange and adoption of leading practices;
- delivering on time, all statistics prepared by ONS;
- being highly efficient, delivering services comparable with the best five statistical offices world-wide;
- applying common, recognised standards and practices across all major statistical sources and measures;
- securing the highest possible response rates for ONS surveys, as benchmarked against performance of other relevant statistical organisations;
- adopting consistent practices to maintain a minimal compliance burden for business;

- building coherence of statistical sources and measures in their basic elements of survey design.
  - promote diversity;
  - provide equality of opportunity.
12. We will have achieved our registration service goals through:
- being recognised for providing a high quality registration service that is easy for any citizen to use;
  - having a registration service which integrates with other public services to support one-stop-shops and life-episode related services that suit the need of the citizen;
  - offering electronic access to current and historical registration records;
  - providing an effective registration service to consistent standards that compare with the best in the public and private sectors.
13. As an organisation we will:
- respect and encourage the contribution of individuals;
  - foster good communications;
  - provide effective leadership;
  - make clear the place and contribution of each person through clear direction and communication of progress;
  - give a high priority to learning and development;
  - develop and sustain an effective workplace;
  - encourage team-working and the sharing of ideas;
  - develop and use an effective reward and performance management system;
  - operate fair and open appraisal and promotion systems;
  - devolve responsibility wherever practicable and encourage effective delegation and innovation;

# The authoritative provider of the statistics we need to know and trust about the UK

14. ONS provides statistics to enable timely decision making by Government, business and the community. In each year the Office produces a wide range of statistics, to support these goals. Overall in 2003/04 it produced 318 major pre-announced publications and has produced 265 major pre-announced publications in the first three quarters of 2004/05.
15. In any year a number of our activities and outputs attract particular attention which the following section focuses on, and presents additional comment. These are generally areas where development work has been identified as required to continue to deliver relevant and timely high quality statistics on particularly challenging and important topics.

## Population estimates

16. Since the first 2001 Census results were published in September 2002, ONS has been reviewing the methods and evidence surrounding the population estimates it produces. The 2001 Census provided evidence that population growth estimates had been over-inflated during the 1990s resulting from both over-correction for non-response in the 1991 Census and over-estimation of net migration to the UK during the decade.
17. Studies carried out during 2004 focussed on areas where the 2001 Census estimates may have been at risk. Known as Local Authority Population Studies, they were designed to improve population estimates in the areas that proved hardest to count in the 2001 Census in England and Wales and involved experts from local government, academia and other bodies.

The results of these studies showed that whilst the Census had worked well in most areas, there was a need to revise the 2001 Census based population estimates by around 100,000 for England and Wales as a whole (a change of less than 0.2 per cent). These revisions were confined to 15 local authorities. Manchester and Westminster were the authorities with the largest changes. The report of the studies was published on 9 September 2004, together with revised 2001 and 2002 mid-year population estimates (MYEs) and the 2003 MYEs. For the full report see [www.statistics.gov.uk/about/Methodology\\_by\\_theme/LAStudies.asp](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about/Methodology_by_theme/LAStudies.asp)

18. The studies have given ONS a stronger understanding of both the operation of the census and Census Coverage Survey and of local authority administrative data, particularly in areas where it is most difficult to measure population. What is clear is that the population in some areas has become significantly more difficult to estimate reliably as a result of its greatly increased mobility, both within and across the national borders. The implications of lessons learnt about the census are being fed into the planning and development of the 2011 Census.
19. The population statistics work programme will now concentrate on looking forward at ways to improve the quality and reliability of the mid-year population estimates (MYEs) between Censuses, to ensure fitness for key purposes such as resource allocation and monitoring the labour market. A key aim is to minimise the risk of differences between the MYEs and the 2011 Census estimates. ONS intends to continue to carry out further studies over the

next few years. These studies will include research into administrative sources to assess their reliability and determine the scope for utilising these sources in population statistics. ONS will work with local authorities on specific case studies.

20. Migration is acknowledged as the most difficult component of population change to measure reliably. ONS is progressing work to implement the recommendations of the National Statistics Quality Review of International Migration Statistics.

## Publication series and new social trends

21. The continued development of impartial analyses and their effective presentation are fundamental to the achievement of the office's aim of being a world class statistical organisation. Key activities over the past year included:
  - Taking advantage of new information from the 2001 Census and drawing on a range of sources, ONS has developed a new series of reports called 'Focus on...'. The series includes two main types of report: web-based overviews and fuller web and paper-based reports. Together they provide a comprehensive statistical picture of aspects of society using the best source of data.
  - The first on-line overview reports in the series – on Ethnicity and Identity, Gender, and Wales: Its People (including a Welsh language version) – were launched in January 2004. Since then, we have added The Labour Market in 2002, Older People, People and Migration, Health, and Religion. Each report contains up to a dozen web pages, each with a key headline, one or two tables/charts and commentary. They also have links to more detailed information and data.
  - ONS published the first of the more detailed reports – *Focus on Social Inequalities* – in

December 2004. These full reports aim to provide a comprehensive description of the topic in question. Whilst they are intended primarily to be paper-based, electronic versions of the reports and underlying data are available for downloading. The *Focus on Social Inequalities* full report was accompanied by an on-line overview report.

22. In the forthcoming year:
  - Reports currently planned for publication in 2005 include overviews on Children and Young People, and Families, and full reports on People and Places, Health, Gender, Older People, Families, and Ethnicity and Religion.
  - *Social Trends* has been the flagship report of the UK statistical system since its launch in 1970 and its format is to be developed from 2005 onwards. The 2005 edition will include links to continually updated versions of key stories and an overview article co-authored by the National Statistician on social change over the past thirty five years.

## Pensions statistics

23. The Pension Statistics Task Force (PSTF) was set up in May 2004 following problems identified with pensions contributions statistics. This is designed to help rebuild confidence in existing pensions statistics by implementing a work programme that will lead to a statistical product that more fully meets the current requirements of pension policy users. The PSTF is an interdepartmental body supported by an Advisory Group, to provide advice and quality assurance of the PSTF work programme.
24. Over the past year, the key element of the work programme was the production of an article, 'Private Pensions and the National Accounts' (published first in June 2004), which set out revised estimates of pension contributions, drawing attention to problems with the wider National Accounts treatment of pensions and

looking to the possible impact on GDP and other key economic statistics. The estimates were well received, with the Pensions Commission putting out a press release endorsing them. For full details please refer to: <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/CCI/article.asp?ID=910>

25. As well as this, the PSTF is continuing to monitor the results of the changes that were introduced to pension fund and insurance company surveys and to assess the need for further development.
26. Over the coming year, the main priorities will be to produce a range of new products making use of current data. These include a new publication, *Pension Trends*, to illustrate the economic and social issues surrounding pensions for a wider audience, more detailed analytical articles and a web-based guide to pension statistics.
27. In addition we will be working to secure improvements to data. This work builds on the initiatives begun under the Pensions Statistics Review Committee. It will include addressing issues identified in the PSTF work programme.

## Public sector employment statistics

28. Building on ONS's long standing work on employment in the public sector, ONS has now taken on a work programme to improve coherence of these data, in particular coordinating the compilation of public sector employment (PSE) statistics across government. This work programme will:
  - use agreed concepts and definitions;
  - improve the quality of the statistics; and
  - incorporate them more coherently into the overall UK employment and jobs statistics system.
29. To take forward the first of these tasks, ONS conducted a number of consultations with government departments and has made some

considerable progress towards gaining agreement across government for single basis for PSE statistics.

30. To address the task of improving the quality of the PSE statistics, ONS devoted some considerable efforts to develop standard definitions for PSE across government and to improve the quality of the published statistics. An article describing this work has been prepared and was published on 11 March 2005. In the course of carrying out this process, a number of new sources of information were utilised, which have allowed both quarterly series and full-time equivalent series to be introduced. Where it has been necessary to revise the previously published series in order to incorporate better quality information, all revisions have been carried backwards on an estimated basis so that consistent time series can be published covering the period from 1991 to date.
31. During 2005, ONS will move towards using the data from its new quarterly survey of employment in central and local government, complemented by information for particular groups of staff assembled from departmental and other sources, to introduce a new system for publishing better quality PSE statistics every quarter rather than every year. The aim will be to integrate this with existing statistical procedures for employment and jobs across the UK economy as a whole.

## Earnings statistics

32. Considerable improvements have been made to ONS's earnings statistics over the past year and further major enhancements are in hand. In order to provide more information about the underlying pattern of earnings growth across the economy as a whole and in particular industry sectors, a new series of the Average Earnings Index (excluding bonuses, seasonally adjusted) was introduced and were included in the Integrated Labour Market release.

33. The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) was introduced in 2004, replacing the New Earnings Survey (NES). This benefits both from a wider coverage of earnings, particularly at the low pay end of the distribution, and also from a much improved estimation methodology that introduced using weighting based on additional information sources. It improves the whole range of outputs and allows a consistent time series to be published for the most recent years. This enabled ONS to improve significantly the quality of the low pay statistics needed by the Low Pay Commission and others for analysis in connection with the National Minimum Wage policy.

34. The Average Earnings Ratio (AER) and the Labour Cost Index (LCI) which were recommended in the Distribution of Earnings National Statistics Quality Review will be published as experimental statistics. The LCI, which was developed as part of a collaborative programme of work across the European Union, extends the scope to include other labour costs as well as wages and salaries and is calculated as an hourly index on a quarterly basis.

## Public sector output and productivity

35. In December 2003 the National Statistician, Len Cook commissioned Sir Tony Atkinson to 'advance methodologies for the measurement of government output, productivity and associated price indices in the context of the National Accounts'. Sir Tony Atkinson produced his interim report in July 2004 and the National Accounts 'Blue Book' 2004 carried revisions based on the greater range of health data available to the Office. The final report was published on 31 January 2005 and provided a number of recommendations about ways in which the measurement of public sector productivity could be improved.

36. The Office welcomed the conclusions of the review, and will be taking forward the recommendations contained therein. It is setting up the UK Centre for Measurement of Government Activity to take forward the work in this area. Preparations for its launch are underway and the Centre will start operating in June 2005.

## Statistical Revisions – progress on revisions action plan

37. In early 2004, the Statistics Commission conducted a review of revisions to economic statistics. It made a number of recommendations, focussing on ways to improve the analysis and the communications of revisions. ONS developed an action plan and has reported on progress in September and December 2004. This was also the subject of an article in the January 2005 edition of *Economic Trends*. Good progress has been made in reviewing forecasting models used in early estimates of GDP. A number of research papers have now been produced. These have identified further areas of research which are currently under investigation. ONS will report on this work as results emerge. First releases now contain revisions analysis as standard, and revisions triangles supporting this analysis are being made available on the National Statistics website. A webpage dedicated to revisions pulls together this information and other more in depth articles. ONS has also arranged and participated in high level workshops and presentations on revisions, in order to communicate better to users the reasons behind revisions. On 30 September 2004, ONS held an Economic Statistics Forum at the Bank of England which was attended by journalists and City Analysts. For more information about ONS revisions please refer to: [http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about\\_ns/economic\\_revisions.asp](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about_ns/economic_revisions.asp)

## Public confidence in official statistics

38. Early in 2004, ONS and the Statistics Commission agreed to jointly fund a project to build an understanding of, and measure, public confidence in British official statistics. The project had four underlying studies:

- desk research to identify the issues underlying public confidence in official statistics in other countries;
- qualitative analysis of the general public's views of official statistics and how they formulate these views, principally using focus groups;
- quantitative analysis of the general public's views of official statistics using the National Statistics Omnibus Survey;
- qualitative analysis of 'opinion-formers' views of official statistics using unstructured interviews.

39. The first three studies were undertaken by ONS and the latter was undertaken by MORI on behalf of the Statistics Commission. Reports on the project, including an overarching report highlighting the key findings, were released on 28 February 2005.

The research found that:

- public confidence in official statistics is a complex issue and confidence levels vary between statistical series and between members of the public;
- there was more confidence in the production process than in the use, dissemination and presentation of statistics;
- there was considerable confidence in the methodologies used to produce official statistics and the accuracy of outputs; and
- the independence of statistical services was one of the most important factors for ensuring confidence in statistics.

However there was a perception among research participants that:

- there was interference at certain stages of the statistical process;
- the statistical service's communication mechanisms were poor in a number of areas;
- the Government influenced official statistics; and
- the media misrepresented official statistics and selectively reported on statistics.

ONS conducted a follow-up survey on public confidence in official statistics in the March 2005 ONS Omnibus Survey. This information will be assessed in the light of the information already gathered and the key messages determined. ONS will then convene a cross-government working group to address the issue of public confidence in official statistics.

## Audit by the European Court of Auditors

40. In February 2005 the European Court of Auditors (ECA) undertook an audit of ONS processes for the production of annual Gross National Income estimates which the European Commission use in calculating member countries contributions to the European budget. ONS have been advised that our 'organisation and supervisory controls and procedures are implemented, checked, reviewed and audited and are operational and functioning effectively'. The ECA are writing to the National Audit Office of the UK stating that they have no audit observations, no recommendations and thanking ONS for our assistance and cooperation during the audit.

## Statistical Development Programmes

41. In addition to producing and making improvements to a large range of statistical outputs, ONS also has a number of major

development programmes. These are designed to develop and expand the infrastructure of the Office thereby sustaining the Office's capacity to respond to new demands, and to reduce risks in the production of our key outputs. The Office has been provided with additional funding in the 2002 and 2004 spending reviews to contribute towards the cost of this work, and the following section outlines progress made during 2004–05.

## Statistical Modernisation Programme

42. The aim of the Statistical Modernisation Programme (SMP) is to improve the quality and timeliness of, and access to, the key statistical systems managed by ONS. The result will be a more robust and comprehensive body of statistical evidence and an improvement in ONS's capacity to meet the needs of Government business and communities, and to inform public policy development and decision-making. We will achieve this by relocating a currently diverse range of systems into a robust and enduring common technological environment supported by an agreed set of common statistical tools and methods.
43. The first phase of SMP is now complete. It has successfully created an early version of a central ONS repository for data (CORD), which is fully supported by metadata<sup>1</sup>, and has incorporated within this a set of standard statistical tools covering time-series, estimation, disclosure and tabulation. Using CORD, the statistical tools and website components, we have demonstrated through use of a prototype system that the vision of a common technological environment is feasible: the architectural design has been proved and a number of conceptual and

1 Metadata is "data about data" – explanations, qualifications, notes and other materials attached to statistical information that help provide context and perspective, particularly in relation to the quality, relevance and appropriate use of statistics.

technical issues have been resolved. In the next stage of SMP the focus will move on from this 'proof of concept' phase to one aimed at delivering production quality business systems that will deliver visible benefits. For example, during 2005/06, the first elements of the modernised systems for the delivery of National Accounts and the Labour Force Survey will be developed and tested. These systems will not only deliver benefits in terms of reduced risk and improved data quality, but will also provide the basis for delivery cash savings and put in place the foundations for further modernised systems in the future.

44. We are also working on the closer integration of some of our other key programmes with SMP. These programmes have many interdependencies, which together contribute to the delivery of cash and non-financial benefits, as well as to efficiency savings. We are using proven methodology, Benefits Realisation Management, to:
- map the activities and changes, which enable the benefits to be realised and use this information to set priorities for investment;
  - identify and manage the independencies between programmes;
  - identify overlaps, duplications and gaps between programmes and take appropriate action.

We are also exploring the extent to which we can build on investments made and outputs and capabilities already developed in other programmes such as Neighbourhood Statistics

## Our development path: 2005 to 2008

45. The first phase of SMP focused on one major infrastructure change. This ambitious approach proved more challenging to implement than we had originally forecast. To complete the programme we will need continuing investment

through to 2008. In addition, building on the lessons learned, we are now taking an incremental approach to further development, which will allow us to move existing processes into the new environment as the relevant standard components become available. Taken together this means that ONS will have a significant period of expenditure on the legacy systems and investment in new infrastructures. This presents challenges in terms of having to ensure the continued relevance of outdated systems, some of which involve continuing high risks as well as resulting in delaying the benefits of the modernisation beyond the original assumption.

46. Our next phase of developments is the application of our technology and methodology achievements, replacing our current processes, and exploiting the power from new tools and ways of working with statistical sources, from their design, gathering information, validating, analysing and presenting, reporting and delivering.

47. In particular:

- The quality of metadata management in all legacy systems of ONS has been so fragmented and insufficiently controlled that we will focus on metadata which drives statistical systems and processes. We have underestimated in the past the limitations of this and will change our development path so as not to prolong the time when we can leave existing fragile legacy tools and systems in place.
- We can achieve our goal over the next three years, of creating a robust and enduring common technological environment supported by an agreed set of common statistical tools and methods, if we simplify our expectations of what we will achieve with metadata, and identify the elements of statistical sources that gain most from the new environment.

- We are unlikely to build up metadata for past statistical information, unless it is fundamental to processing current results, except for time-series and geographic arrays of statistical aggregates.
- Our statistical sources require varying degrees of complexity in information structures and linkages. We can make good progress on bringing simpler statistical sources into the common information management environment if we separate out our statistical sources by degrees of complexity, and identify components of the system associated with each statistical source where legacy processes might continue for a longer period alongside transformed processes.

## Neighbourhood Statistics (NeSS)

48. The Neighbourhood Statistics Service was established in 2000 to improve the evidence base underpinning the Government's approach to social exclusion and neighbourhood renewal. At the heart of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal is the need for good quality statistics that are freely available and describe neighbourhood characteristics consistently over time and space and at the lowest possible levels of geography. NeSS's core customers include everyone involved in the development, delivery and evaluation of policies and programmes aimed at tackling deprivation and improving life in local communities. Amongst the key deliverables of the five year development programme are a comprehensive and freely accessible, web-based statistical information service, based upon a sub-local authority level geography termed 'Super Output Areas' and the tools to enable data owners in Government Departments to provide data which is appropriate to this.
49. The first version of the Neighbourhood Statistics website was launched in February 2001 and has been substantially developed and

enhanced through subsequent releases. The website currently attracts over 1,000 visitors per day on average and has 9,000 registered users. Highlights during 2004–05 have seen the Programme:

- Develop, agree and release the new standard statistical geography termed ‘Super Output Areas’, which represents the foundation upon which consistent, neighbourhood level statistics will be provided. Census 2001 outputs, DWP benefits statistics and the ODPM commissioned 2004 Indices of Deprivation are all now available in this form.
  - Develop and distribute the NeSS data suppliers toolkit. This comprehensive toolkit enables data suppliers to provide data in the appropriate format by providing them with address matching and cleaning, geographic referencing, disclosure control, aggregation, metadata and formatting tools. So far 70 copies have been distributed to data suppliers across central government.
  - Significantly improve the statistical content. The website contains approximately 150 datasets and this continues to grow, although there is still much to do in some areas, especially the crime and health domains.
  - Develop methods for estimating small area statistics where the surveys and administrative systems cannot provide the detail. Small area income estimates and small area population estimates are amongst the first applications of these methods.
50. The development Programme component of Neighbourhood Statistics is now approaching its final financial year. Amongst the key deliverables are:
- The release of the new Neighbourhood Statistics website in April 2005. As well as offering considerable enhancements to the service, this latest version migrates Neighbourhood Statistics into the Oracle / Java

technology which ONS has selected as its strategic platform for IT development.

- The range and timeliness of statistics, based upon the Super Output Area geography strengthened as further datasets are added and time series data accumulates.
  - Improved on-line applications which will enable users to more easily analyse, contrast and compare summary statistics at neighbourhood level.
  - Training for users, with a focus on Regeneration and Renewal practitioners, who will use the service to identify, monitor and evaluate initiatives.
  - Transition from the development programme to a fully operational live service that will remain responsive to new requirements.
51. Research highlights that the benefits of the Neighbourhood Statistics Service are already being felt amongst key users within the Regeneration and Renewal community and within Local and National Government. Over 70 per cent of potential core users say they have used NeSS in the past 12 months and over 90 per cent of those have found it a useful tool for doing their job, with half saying it saves their organisation money. Overall, 83 per cent say they’re happy with the service and for those who are not the most common wish is for better navigation and more up-to-date and comprehensive content.

### **Allsopp review of statistics for economic policy making**

52. A review of statistics for economic policy making, commissioned by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and led by Christopher Allsopp (ex member of the UK Monetary Policy Committee), completed its final report in March 2004. The review considered firstly the information requirements to support UK regional economic policy and secondly the

extent to which official statistics had kept pace with the changing structure of the UK economy.

53. The Review put forward a number of recommendations to improve the quality and provision of statistics for economic policy, many of which fall to ONS for implementation. A paper explaining in general terms how we plan to take forward the implementation of the recommendations was published in November 2004. For further details please refer to: [http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about/data/development/downloads/IMPLEMENTING\\_ALLSOPP.pdf](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about/data/development/downloads/IMPLEMENTING_ALLSOPP.pdf)
54. ONS has been working with other departments to take forward the Allsopp recommendations and outlined a programme of work. The key elements of implementation will be based around developing the essential statistical infrastructure; building surveys; and developing statistical outputs.
55. This work will cut across and affect many parts of ONS as well as statistical work in other government departments. Senior advisory groups (with external membership) have been set up to ensure there is a coordinated and coherent approach to the way the recommendations are tackled across this spectrum.
56. The first Allsopp report is available at [http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/consultations\\_and\\_legislation/allsopp\\_review/consult\\_allsopp\\_back.cfm](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/consultations_and_legislation/allsopp_review/consult_allsopp_back.cfm) and the final report is available at [http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/consultations\\_and\\_legislation/allsopp\\_review/consult\\_allsopp\\_index.cfm](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/consultations_and_legislation/allsopp_review/consult_allsopp_index.cfm).

## Census 2011

57. The Census is the largest statistical project in government and the largest peacetime operation involving the general public. It provides information on population units, for example, counts and demographic information, population structures for example family

relationships and population characteristics and other topic information such as education, housing, health, etc. The Census is unique in enabling multivariate analyses for small geographic areas and for small population subgroups so, for example, the interaction of ethnicity, education and employment can be explored at small area level. Analysis provides an understanding of social and regional inequality and Census outputs are a key component of Neighbourhood Statistics.

58. Planning for the 2011 Census has started earlier than for the 2001 Census in order to improve the outcome and to mitigate many of the risks compared with 2001. This is in accordance with the advice given in both the Treasury Select Committee review and the ONS Evaluation Reports for the 2001 Census.
59. To date work has concentrated on establishing the need for a Census, the design of the 2011 Census, establishment of a governance structure and planning the rest of the project. We have an initial design which includes a number of innovative features which are aimed at improving the overall response rate and the accuracy of the data.
60. Work in 2005/06 will be aimed at preparation for the 2007 test, including procurement of external suppliers and finalisation of the design and development of an evaluation strategy.

## Citizens Information Programme

61. The vision of the Citizen Information Project (CIP) is to provide a shared national infrastructure of basic personal data, such as name, address and date of birth, so as to facilitate major economies, efficiencies and service improvements across the UK public sector. The CIP team, based in ONS, undertook the project definition stage of exploratory work. The project is a cross-government initiative. As well as seeking improved policy analysis, research and National Statistics, the work is

supporting the Efficiency Review agenda, further improvements to public services, including more personalised services, and the roll-out of e-government. The lead option emerging from an earlier feasibility study centred on establishing a UK population register. Work in project definition stage confirmed that a population register has the potential to generate efficiency benefits and service improvements across government. The CIP team investigated the costs and benefits of a range of potential options for delivering a population register. The team recommended that proposals for a National Identity Register (NIR), part of the Government's proposals for ID cards, mean that if ID cards were to become compulsory then it would be more cost-effective to deliver the population register benefits through the NIR, rather than develop a separate register. The Chief Secretary announced to the House on 28 October 2004 that the Government accepted this recommendation.

62. The second stage of project definition is due to report to Ministers by June 2005. This includes examining in more detail how the NIR could function as a population register and exploring options for adding value to existing database developments, including in local government, that could be cost-effective ahead of the NIR reaching maturity. This includes investigating the better use of personal reference numbers to improve the quality and effectiveness of existing registers. ONS is also exploring how efficiency and analytical requirements that cover the whole population, rather than just adults, can be met, for example by understanding the issues around use of indexes that are being developed in England to implement the Children Bill.

Further information on the CIP can be found at <http://www.gro.gov.uk/cip>

# Ensuring the efficient and accurate registration of key life events

63. Civil registration continues to have high operational activity, a demanding policy agenda and work on registration reform. During the year, the General Register Office (GRO) has worked with other Government Departments supporting the passage of legislation on addressing sham marriages, on the introduction of civil partnerships and on gender recognition. The Regulatory Reform Order containing proposals for the modernisation of births and deaths registration was laid in July and rejected by the Parliamentary Committees in December. Currently, GRO are considering the way forward and will progress plans for modernisation of registration services.

64. Casework targets for the first nine months of 2004/05 were met with 99.3 per cent of urgent cases dealt with within 5 days (target 99 per cent) and 99.6 per cent of non-urgent cases within 20 days (target 95 per cent). The on-line ordering service for certificates (certified copies of a register entry) on the GRO website continues to be extremely successful. In April, 45 per cent of all certificates produced were based on Registration On Line Ordering (ROLO) applications, rising to 64 per cent in December 2004. The monthly numbers of certificates produced from all application routes (on-line, postal, telephone and in-person to the Family Record Centre) continues to increase from 107,720 in April to 123,560 in November 2004 (168,000 applications received) with a seasonal dip to 101,775 in December. The number of certificates produced averages 106,550 per month over the first three quarters of 2004/05.

65. To deliver the additional demand resulting from the on-line ordering facility, ONS has

invested in increased production capacity. However, managing the significant increase in demand due to the success of the service has and is causing difficulties, placing greater pressure on resources and causing some slippage in turnaround. Additional staffing, changes in working patterns, new equipment and better use of accommodation have been used to ensure targets are met. There were some delays in April, May, November and December which resulted not meeting the published target of 90 per cent certificates sent out on time. For the first three quarters of 2004/05 an average of 74.4 per cent were sent out on time with a further 4.1 per cent sent out one day late.

## Civil Registration Review Programme

66. The Civil Registration Programme will implement the recommendations of the Civil Registration Review now identified as an Office for Government Commerce 'mission critical' project, reflecting its importance in modernising key services, particularly through the use of new technology. The model for a future service is intended to:

- give choice and convenience in registering a birth or death – in person at any Register Office, over the phone or via the Internet;
- provide greater choice in time, place and content of marriage and make it easier to give notice to marry;
- have a central electronic database containing recent and new registrations;
- make the electronic record the legal record and remove the need for certificates by allowing users of certificates to access the database;

- enable the public to notify organisations (for example, financial services of a death) electronically;
  - give Local Authorities the duty to provide face to face registration services tailored to the needs of their communities within a framework of National Standards;
  - enable Local Authorities to provide additional services (for example, baby naming, marriage reaffirmation);
  - create a framework to deliver changes in family registration policy (for example, same sex partnerships, transsexuals, citizenship ceremonies) and to focus services on a life event for example, bereavement;
  - be an important contributor to wider Government work on identity cards, single citizen data-spine, etc.
67. Several changes to civil registration legislation are required to enable the Government and the general public to take advantage of developments in web-based technology and electronic communications. On advice from its lawyers ONS presented a Registration Review Order (RRO) to the relevant Parliamentary Committees for scrutiny in July 2004. Unfortunately the Committees considered that this was not an appropriate use of the order-making powers as set out in the 2001 Act. ONS is therefore now examining the potential of alternative legislative options.
68. There have been a number of important achievements in 2004:
- The General Register Office official website was launched in May 2004 and won the corporate sector category in the annual public sector web awards. With further high exposure when linked to the BBC Family History series the number of visitors to the site remains very high rising from about 60,000 a month at inception to over 120,000 a month this year.
  - The programme underwent a Gateway Level Two Review in July 2004 and achieved a very favourable report in all areas of its operations with an overall amber rating.
  - Preparation of Local Authorities for local control of registration services has progressed to plan with over 91 per cent of local authorities having drawn up clear plans or better:
69. ONS is continuing with its investment in technology, as there are still considerable benefits that can be gained from the modernisation of back office systems in GRO. All key government and private sector stakeholders received full briefings following the legislative difficulties and a comprehensive follow up strategy has been implemented. Key actions include:
- All IT suppliers have been instructed to quote for providing systems to cope with existing legislation as well as delivering flexibility to amend for changes covered by the RRO.
  - The procurement for digitisation of existing registration records also continues as many cost efficiencies have already been identified from this initiative.
  - The procurement and implementation of a modern Contact Centre to support telephone requests and to provide an effective and efficient service is progressing to plan with contracts agreed and work commenced in December 2004.

# Driving the development of National Statistics

70. The National Statistics Strategy is based around building trust in official statistics. Success is measured across two sets of criteria:
- the extent to which National Statistics products and services are commonly perceived to embody the values set out in the Code of Practice;
  - the extent to which decision makers can engage in a timely and decisive way on a range of political and professional issues.
71. ONS has driven forward the National Statistics agenda on a number of fronts, both on its own account, and as the central coordinating agency for the Government Statistical Service (GSS) as a whole:
- Improving public confidence and trust in official statistics – ONS has completed a UK-wide programme of ‘communication and engagement’ seminars covering all government departments with the aim of achieving full UK compliance with the *National Statistics Code of Practice* and its twelve supporting *Protocols* by the end of 2004/05;
  - Accountability – ONS has reviewed and re-engineered the National Statistics business planning and reporting process in order to make the *National Statistics Work Programme* and the *National Statistics Annual Report* more useable and accessible, and to integrate them more closely with the equivalent ONS reporting arrangements, and with wider government driven public service reporting and accountability arrangements;
  - Enhancing the quality and relevance of official statistics – ONS has re-scoped and re-engineered the rolling five-year *National Statistics Quality Review Programme* in order to expedite delivery, and encompass the full range of quality assurance work undertaken across the GSS;
  - Professional competence – ONS has absorbed the GSS recruitment and development functions into the National Statistics Policy and Operations function in order to push forward a programme of continuing professional development and integrate this with the wider *Integrating Analysis and Professional Skills for Government initiatives*;
  - Accessibility versus Confidentiality – ONS has established a Legal Services Unit in order to harmonise National Statistics policies, principles and procedures with the wider *Data Protection and Freedom of Information* initiatives;
  - International Best Practice – ONS has adopted international best practice and contributed to international efforts to enhance the quality, integrity, quality, accessibility, efficiency and comparability of UK statistics;
  - National Statistics Online – we have expanded the coverage and content of National Statistics material on the National Statistics website.
  - Fuller details on National Statistics are available at [http://nswebcopy/about\\_ns/downloads/NSAnnRep200304.pdf](http://nswebcopy/about_ns/downloads/NSAnnRep200304.pdf)

# Contribution to the leadership of the statistical system of the European Union and ensuring that engagement in international statistics is effective in the breadth of issues important to the UK

## International engagement

72. The UK is actively engaged with international organisations in the development of standards and classifications, as well as providing leadership across a wide range of statistical issues. Eurostat, with the power to initiate legislation that is directly applicable in UK law, has a significant impact on the activity of ONS. The National Statistician plays an active role in the Eurostat Statistical Programme Committee (SPC). Comprising Directors General of National Statistical Offices and the Eurostat Director General, SPC agrees statistical policy at a European level and gives its opinion at an early stage on proposed legislation and related developments. For example, ONS has played a leading role in the preparation of a draft Code of Conduct to strengthen governance of the European Statistical System. Other international engagements include:

- Study visits have been hosted for statisticians from a number of countries to learn UK methods, with longer programmes organised for groups from the Kirghiz Republic and Nigeria.
- ONS has continued its partnership with the State Statistics Office of Ukraine, providing assistance in the areas of management development, methodology and social statistics.
- The National Statistician is a member of the Board managing the global International

Comparison Programme (ICP) overseeing preparation of purchasing power parities for the majority of countries to permit more robust comparisons of poverty, in support of monitoring the Millennium Development Goals.

- ONS has agreed to assist African countries, with a programme of technical assistance currently being agreed with the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and the African Development Bank.
- ONS participated in the development of statistics at the OECD, including the National Statistician being a member of the OECD Committee on Statistics that agrees statistical policy, contributing to a range of sub-committees and presenting papers at the World Forum on key indicators.
- ONS continued participation in the Paris Group. This group is an informal international gathering of Labour Statisticians from National Statistical Institutes and International Agencies. ONS has provided expertise for re-drafting the ILO (International Labour Organisation) resolution on working time statistics.
- The Director of Methodology is on the Netherlands Central Bureau of Statistics Advisory Board on Methodology and Information Technology.

## Developing international standards for the National Accounts

73. ONS is actively participating in an exercise lead by the United Nations Statistical Commission to update international standards and guidelines for the national accounts and related systems. These comprise a set of manuals with the main elements being the 1993 System of National Accounts (SNA93), the Balance of Payments, 5th edition (BPM5) Manual, the 2001 Government Finance Statistics (GFSM2001) Manual and the 1995 European System of Accounts (ESA95). The manuals are updated periodically to reflect new economic and financial developments and the associated needs of users. The current update is designed to lead to the publication of Revised SNA93 and Revised BPM5 manuals in 2008 with the others following later. It is expected that implementation of the Revised ESA95 for EU Member States will be from 2012.
74. An advisory board has been established to provide ONS with help and advice from users of the accounts. Members include representatives of the Treasury, Bank of England, the academic community, the City and the UK Accounting Standards Board. The international discussion and working papers are available on the National Statistics website.

## Supporting the UK's Presidency of the EU which starts in July 2005

75. ONS will manage the responsibilities falling to the National Statistics Office resulting from the UK holding the EU Presidency during July to December 2005. The key requirements of ONS are to facilitate the passage of statistics legislation, progress and launch policy initiatives, and play a leadership role among Member States in the response to emerging issues. ONS will chair the Council Working Group on Statistics, which negotiates legislation and presents its opinion on EU initiatives with statistical implications. ONS is strengthening

links with statistics offices of EU partners to ensure a thorough understanding of the issues and the position of other Member States. With other government departments likely to have policy responsibility for statistics legislation being introduced, ONS is also strengthening links across the GSS to ensure a consistent response to crosscutting issues.

## ONS and GSS international participation

76. A number of initiatives have been launched recently to strengthen ONS/GSS international participation, including:
- Implementation has started of a single method for transferring ONS data to Eurostat electronically. Replacing a range of software, this will allow greater control of data transfer and permit comprehensive reporting of compliance with Eurostat deadlines for data provision.
  - Participating in the annual United Nations Statistics Commission meeting, that brings together Directors General of national statistics offices from around the world, and contributing to a review of the decision-making process.
  - With the objective of strengthening GSS international participation and facilitating coherent policy development, ONS recently launched an International Committee bringing together statisticians from across departments with an interest in international issues.
  - A regular bulletin has been introduced reporting to the GSS on international developments.

# Managing ourselves

This section sets out how ONS manages itself in order to achieve its aims and objectives.

77. In order to achieve its aims and objectives and fully secure the benefits of modernisation, it is essential that the Office develops, motivates and recruits talented staff who understand the community we serve and have the right skills to take maximum advantage of the new technological environment that is being built. Any significant modernisation programme presents a challenge in itself. The Office must also ensure that it achieves the two agreed key requirements from the 2004 Spending Review, as set out below.

## Efficiency

78. ONS is required to:

- deliver efficiency gains rising to £25 million per year by 2007/08, at least half of which will be cash releasing, allowing resources to be recycled into the Office's priority programmes. This target includes a reduction of 700 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff; and
- move 850 jobs out of London and the South East by March 2010, with 600 to be relocated by March 2008.

79. ONS aims to deliver the target of £25 million of efficiency gains by the end of the decade through:

- modernisation of our statistical and technical capability – continued implementation of a statistical modernisation programme, funded from the 2002 Spending Review and based on an IT programme that is both essential to support the ONS work programme and could be extended for wider public sector use. Cash

benefits from modernisation are estimated to be at least £5 million per annum, with additional quantifiable statistical benefits of at least £8 million per annum.

- high quality, value for money corporate services – continued development and phased introduction of an Enterprise Resource Planning System (ERPS), integrating management, personnel and financial information providing the Office with greater standardisation and delivered at lower cost. Implementation of the HR functionality has begun during 2004/05. Phased introduction, and relocation, of other functions will result in efficiencies of around £5 million per annum by 2007/08.
- procurement that delivers excellent value for money to the organisation – to continue to establish a more strategic approach to procurement, including the identification of ring-fenced annual procurement budgets for specific projects, whilst realising cost reductions from a comprehensive review of existing and new contractual arrangements. Other key procurement initiatives will include development of a Key Supplier Programme to analyse individual supplier expenditure and value for money to ONS; a review of the possibilities for extending use of OGC and consortium arrangements; extending use of the Government Procurement Card and increasing our use of innovative initiatives such as e-auctions. Procurement savings are anticipated to realise around £2.5 million per year by 2007/08.

- substantial relocation of our business (see below); and
- significant overall staff reductions resulting from the above strategies – we are aiming to reduce our staff numbers by 700 Full Time Equivalents (FTEs) between 1 April 2004 and 31 March 2008. This is a challenging target, given the amount of new work which ONS has been asked to undertake. We shall work towards it on a number of fronts, such as the completion of a number of large projects with the project teams being disbanded; the re-scoping and dropping of some lower priority activities; savings through common statistical systems and standardised administrative systems and tools, and less labour-intensive General Register Office operations.

Detail on the measures and methodologies used to assess the achievement of these gains are set out in the ONS Efficiency Technical Note (published on the National Statistics website).

## Relocation

80. An announcement was made in September 2004 that ONS plans to relocate the full-time equivalent of 600 posts to Newport, South Wales by March 2008, as part of which a small number of posts have moved in 2004/05 and around 130 are planned to relocate during 2005/06. Most of these posts will move from the London site. A small number will transfer from the Titchfield site to Newport and (to provide a more logical co-location of statistical functions) from London to Titchfield.
81. During 2004/05, action was taken to:
- develop ‘themes’ for each site – that is, the type of work expected to be carried out on our three major statistical sites in the medium term and develop detailed proposals for the transfer of the work of individual business areas;
  - establish the initial views of staff via a preference exercise;

- examine transfer terms and conditions for staff;
- develop proposals for handling recruitment and selection during the relocation period and to set out key principles for handling the relocation of posts;
- provide information for staff on the Newport and Titchfield areas and run familiarisation tours of each area;
- start to put in place support arrangements for staff, both for those who are relocating and those looking for alternatives – this support will include career counselling and outplacement services; and
- prepare the Newport site to accommodate relocating staff.

82. During 2005/06, the immediate focus will be on the implementation of the detailed plans to relocate around 130 posts to Newport, ensuring that infrastructure and accommodation needs will be complete and that support and counselling will be available.

## ONS Staff

83. The Office has some important change programmes in place, using SR 2002 funding, to bring about modern, more systematised and efficient approaches to almost all aspects of its business. During 2004/05, the Office was still bringing new staff resource into these programmes, some of it on a short-term basis. It has also recruited significant numbers of new clerical staff into the General Register Office to deal with a large upsurge in requests for copies of birth, marriage and death certificates – the costs of these staff are met through income from certificate sales. As a consequence, ONS staff numbers are up on the previous year despite the commitment to achieve significant reductions by March 2008. However, as the Office moves through its modernisation and efficiency programme, the intention is to meet the efficiency targets through a simplified

organisational structure with simpler, re-engineered processes. The overall types and levels of jobs in ONS will be quite different from now, with fewer labour-intensive jobs and more jobs which add value and require higher skills.

## Diversity

84. ONS is committed to ensuring that its workforce properly reflects the society it serves. ONS values the diversity of its staff and, through policies and practices, aims to achieve equality of opportunity in employment and fair treatment for all. The ONS People Strategy aims to 'Create a working environment where the value of diversity is embedded in the organisation'. A Diversity Champion, at board level, has recently been appointed and he is encouraging staff to participate in office networks, for example for staff from ethnic minority backgrounds and for staff with disabilities. In our recruiting we continue to target more diverse groups in the local communities in which we operate, and we have introduced diversity objectives into our performance management system. Almost 7 per cent of our staff are from a minority ethnic group, (with 20 per cent of our London staff from such groups). Just over 5 per cent have a disability. Women make up just over 60 per cent of our workforce.
85. As part of our plans to relocate posts to Newport in South Wales following the Lyons review, we have carried out a Race Equality Impact Assessment. We are working with the local Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) to minimise the impact of relocation for our staff from minority ethnic communities.
86. ONS offers a variety of alternative working patterns, including part-time working, term-time working and flexitime, to enable staff to achieve a good work/life balance.

87. We have specific diversity targets for our SCS, which are as follows:

### SCS Diversity targets

	SR2002 Target for 2004–05 (%)	SR2004 for April 2008 (%)	ONS at 1 October 2004 (%)
Women	35.0	37.0	32
Women in top management posts	25.0	30.0	35
Ethnic minority	3.2	4.0	3.3
Disabled	3.0	3.2	1.7

88. The table above shows that ONS is close to the 2005 targets for women and ethnic minority staff and will continue to work towards the 2008 targets. It will be a challenge to sustain this over the next four years during a period of staff reductions and relocation out of London and the South East, but that will be our goal. We are considering what further steps we need to take to improve representation of disabled staff in the SCS, including encouraging staff to declare any disability.

## Recruitment

89. ONS is committed to selection on the basis of fair and open competition. In accordance with the Commissioners' Recruitment Code there are systems in place to ensure that this is the case. The procedures in the ONS Recruitment Handbook conform to the Commissioners' Code and are reviewed regularly so that it is in line with any changes to the Code and to Equal Opportunities policy. ONS recruits overseas staff from EU and non-EU countries, in line with the Commissioners' Code. A record is kept of any contracts that are extended using the permitted exceptions. These are published on an annual basis in the ONS Annual Report. The use of exceptions is kept to a minimum.
90. The pattern of recruitment varies across the sites with large volume clerical recruitment in Southport to support the increasing demand for certificate services there, to London with more high grade and specialist vacancies. We are

building relationships with universities to enable a more targeted approach to recruitment as we strive to recruit top quality graduates.

91. There have been two major cross site recruitment schemes – the first in February/ March 2004 to prepare for modernisation, and the second in October 2004 to recruit specialist Statisticians, Methodologists and Researchers to fill vacancies for posts that are relocating. All posts were filled through open competition except for one SCS post for which the Commissioners approval was sought and obtained. In addition, continuous recruitment schemes ran throughout the year in order to fill business as usual posts.
- 66 per cent of our recruits were women, 7.7 per cent were from ethnic minority groups, and 4.2 per cent were people with disabilities.

## Developing staff

92. As well as the ongoing development opportunities open to staff, key development activity implemented during the period, and in support of our modernisation programme includes:
- introducing a modular programme of management development for new and established managers, offering both refresher and new development in a range of management and leadership areas, to equip senior managers to provide effective leadership through a period of significant change. In particular, ONS has formed a partnership with the Henley Business School to deliver leadership and change management development.
  - centralising ONS wide training administration and self-service of bookings via the training administration module of the new Enterprise Resource Planning system and a learning enquiries database.
  - attendance by a selection of key staff on high profile European statistical training courses.

- ongoing programme of in-house (externally RSS accredited) statistical development with an average of 60–80 staff per annum participating.

## Health and Safety

93. All staff who work with display screen equipment or in specialist areas (that is, other than the normal office environment) have been risk assessed during the year. Regular H&S inspections and awareness raising ensures the health and safety message is continuously reinforced. This has contributed to a growing H&S culture which is indicated by a continuously decreasing small number of minor reported accidents over previous years. ONS continues to have a robust H&S Policy which is reviewed annually to ensure it accurately reflects the way ONS conducts its business, remains up-to-date with relevant legislation and reflects best practice. Compliance with the Policy is monitored and an internal H&S Audit has been conducted.

## Progress towards sustainable development

94. ONS is making good progress against targets set out in the Framework for Sustainable Development. A detailed progress report can be found under ‘sustainable development’ on the National Statistics website. Key achievements include:
- ISO 14001 achieved at four main sites covering 95 per cent of the organisation. The two remaining sites should be accredited by 31 March 2006.
  - Water consumption has been reduced to below the Framework target of 7.7m<sup>3</sup> per head.
  - Energy consumption has been reduced over 1999–00 levels.
  - Recycling rates are up to 38 per cent with initiatives being put in place for further improvement.

- 8 per cent of the estate's energy needs are provided from renewable sources.

## Freedom of Information (FOI)

95. At the end of May ONS had received 159 requests. All but two of the requests received have been completed within the statutory FOI time limit.
96. The Office has in place a trained team to support FOI enquiries and who channel and report on requests to the Board. Over 70 per cent of ONS staff, including field staff, have undertaken training to understand the principles and processes to support the Freedom of Information Act within ONS. Plans are in place to ensure 100 per cent of Pay band D (Grade 7 and above) staff have been trained with ongoing arrangements in place to include FOI training within staff induction courses.

## Publicity and advertising

### Web development and publishing

97. National Statistics Online is a primary channel of communication for ONS in its role as a publisher of statistics and a statistical news provider. Over the course of 2004 there have been over eight million individual visits to the site. Content is continually updated – with over 300 ‘nuggets’ or statistical news stories a year on the site. Refinements to its design and architecture are in progress – our aim by April 2005 is to create a one-stop access point for all Government statistical sources from National Statistics Online.
98. In May 2004 an upgraded version of the General Register Office website went live, offering an on-line information source and ordering service for certificates. Collaboration with the BBC's ‘Who Do You Think You Are’ series resulted in a 72 per cent increase in monthly visitors and ordering of certificates. Our aim will be to improve further the user

experience of the site to meet RNIB recommendations on accessibility.

99. ONS is responsible for development of the following other websites: ‘About ONS’ (the corporate ONS website, launch date June 2005), Eurostat (guide to European statistics, launch date March 2005), Stats4Schools (a site for teachers made available in Welsh, as well as English, in January 2005).
100. In January 2005 academic publisher Palgrave Macmillan became official publisher for ONS, providing opportunities to review, upgrade and more actively market our print publication portfolio.

## Survey response promotion

101. In order to encourage public involvement in surveys we are redesigning our supporting information materials in line with our research amongst the general public. Revamped materials emphasising benefits to the community that result from data collection have been piloted with the Labour Force Survey and the Annual Population Survey. Our aim is to extend communication of best practice across social and business surveys.

## Performance in responding to correspondence from the public

102. During the period April to December 2004, the Customer Contact Centre for National Statistics received over 40,000 telephone enquiries with a further 25,500 calls received by the ONS Switchboard – over 94 per cent of these were answered within the London business standard of 11 seconds. The Contact Centre also received 85 written enquiries, which were answered within 10 days and some 11,500 emails to ‘info@statistics.gov.uk’, of which 100 per cent were answered within 48 hours.
103. In addition, the National Statistician's office received some 175 written enquiries, of which 85 per cent were answered within 10 days. The

Office also received 120 written enquiries, from members of the public, through Ministers, of which 78 per cent were answered within 10 days.

104. ONS has received Contact Centre Association accreditation, which gives a quality mark in our customer service standards normally only held by private bodies. The Office is also in the final stages of being assessed by the British Standards Institute for the ISO EN 9001/2000 which will confirm that we meet those quality standards.

### **Embedding Centres of Excellence in programme and project management**

105. ONS has maintained momentum in driving forward the programme of work as part of the Office of Government Commerce (OGC) initiative for establishing Centres of Excellence (COE) in Programme and Project Management (PPM). The work to enhance and develop PPM capacity and capability is managed as a formal programme within ONS, with an improvement plan to meet the targets set by the OGC.
106. Working in close collaboration with the OGC, ONS has made progress with the key areas of the COE improvement plan. A major development this year is the introduction of a Corporate Governance Reporting System for the whole of the office, including its key strategic programmes. The Gateway Review process is now managed centrally and proactively, and ONS now has a clearly defined process for Gateway Reviews which is working well. Four members of staff have been accredited as Gateway reviewers and a further ten ONS staff have been identified as potential reviewers.

### **Changes to the organisation structure and top management**

107. During 2004, the Office appointed Hilary Douglas as Chief Operating Officer. Cynthia

Clark was appointed the Executive Director of the Methodology Directorate. Jil Matheson was appointed the Executive Director of the Economic and Social Reporting Directorate, replacing John Pullinger who moved on secondment to become the Head of the House of Commons Library. Following publication of the Atkinson Report, Joe Grice was appointed Executive Director of the newly created Centre for Measurement of Government Activity. Finally, Sir Robert Culpin has been appointed as a non-executive director.

108. A full list of the ONS senior management team and non-executive Directors, and details of Senior Civil Service Staff salaries are provided below in the chapter on Other Key Departmental Information.

### **ONS governance**

109. The Office reviewed its corporate governance arrangements, in line with the Code of Good Practice for Corporate Governance in Central Government Departments, to streamline and improve the overall effectiveness of its committee structure and office governance, with a number of cross-cutting committees (for example, Statistical Policy, Finance and Planning, Departmental Operations) supporting the main Boards.
110. External assurance is delivered through the National Audit Office, whose reports are presented to Parliament by statute for scrutiny by the Public Accounts Committee.

### **Committee Appearances and Recommendations**

111. Len Cook and senior ONS managers made a series of Committee appearances during 2004, including:
- Len Cook and Dennis Roberts, Director of Registration Services, appeared before the Home Affairs Committee on 27 April to answer

questions on the Citizens Information Project and the interface with the government's proposals on identity cards.

- Len Cook and senior ONS managers appeared before the Sub-committee of the Treasury Committee on 27 October 2004 to answer questions on the ONS Annual Report.
- Dennis Roberts and senior GRO staff appeared before the House of Commons Regulatory Reform Committee and the House of Lords Select Committee on Delegated Powers and Regulatory Reform with the Financial Secretary to the Treasury on 2 and 10 November 2004, to answer questions on the Regulatory Reform Order on modernisation of the registration service. The Committees concluded that the order making power under the Regulatory Reform Act 2001 should not be used for these civil registration proposals: the Government is considering its next steps for modernising civil registration.

# Other key departmental information

## Better Regulation

### Statistics

112. ONS provides statistics for business use which enable them to assess trends in their industry and improve their competitive performance. ONS is not a regulatory agency, but does have statutory powers to collect data from business, and some surveys are also conducted under European regulation. Completing the questionnaires has a cost to business ('the compliance cost'). The overall compliance cost for business surveys is controlled internally in ONS by the Compliance Board within limits set by the Financial Secretary to the Treasury. The total cost to business of this work in 2004/05 (at 2004 prices) is estimated at £28.8million (an increase of £1 million on 2003/04) which covers the impact of 68 surveys. In 2005/06 we expect the compliance burden on business to fall by £0.3 million. In addition, during 2004/05 ONS began to assess the compliance burden on respondents of participating in household surveys as a matter of course; the respondents to household surveys are private individuals and so for these surveys we have found it more appropriate to measure the benefit in terms of hours spent in completing our survey forms. The annual ONS Compliance Plan contains more details about how ONS has monitored the burden imposed by our surveys, as well as our plans for the coming years, and also indicates the extent to which we have contributed to wider initiatives led by the Regulatory Impact Unit, now the Better Regulation Executive.
113. ONS conducts regular cyclical reviews of all its surveys following the instructions for controlling Government Statistical Surveys,

issued by the Prime Minister's Office in 1999. These reviews ensure that surveys obtain the information needed to properly measure the economic activity within the UK whilst imposing the minimum load on respondents and include a review of the cost to businesses of participating in the survey. During 2004/05 ONS conducted 17 cyclical reviews, 13 of which were for surveys with compliance costs in excess of £0.25 million. The reviews are listed at the foot of this section. ONS is particularly aware of the loads it imposes on small businesses and, with a small number of exceptions, ensures businesses with less than ten in employment are not re-surveyed within three years. ONS is also considering how it can extend similar guarantees to businesses with between ten and nineteen in employment and, for large complex businesses, has a team dedicated to minimising the compliance cost on a case by case basis.

114. ONS continues to review its calculations of compliance costs using new information gained from its own surveys. All new business surveys and new questions in existing business surveys are subject to a formal compliance cost assessment before they are approved. This ensures that the load on business is kept under review at all times, and that any additional loads are justified by the benefits they bring.
115. During 2004/05, each of the proposed increases to the compliance cost were significantly below the £20 million threshold for regulatory impact assessments (RIA) set in the Cabinet Office guidance. Because all proposed changes to the questions in business surveys were within the present mature regulatory framework, ONS did

not need to develop new statutory surveys during the year.

116. During 2005/06 ONS will continue its rolling program of survey reviews, reviewing 19 surveys, 12 of which are for surveys with compliance costs in excess of £0.25 million.

## General Register Office

117. 2004/05 also saw the development of proposals to modernise the Registration service in England and Wales but, in line with the guidance, no RIA was prepared as again the costs to business of the proposals fell well short of the £20 million lower limit.

118. ONS worked on one Regulatory Reform Order during the year. This was to modernise the provision of birth and death registration services in England and Wales. This order was

unsuccessful as a result of the parliamentary committees' decision that the scope of the Order was too great and too controversial for an RRO to be appropriate, and ONS is currently exploring its options for taking this forward.

## List of reviews. The following surveys were subject to their regular cyclical review in 2004/05:

- Monthly survey of internet service providers
- Quarterly foreign direct investment
- Annual foreign direct investment
- Monthly production inquiry
- CAPEX inquiries
- Stocks inquiries
- Labour disputes survey
- Corporate sector price indices
- Business spending on capital goods survey

## ONS Management Board, March 2005

<i>Len Cook</i>	<i>National Statistician; Director of ONS, Registrar General for England and Wales</i>	
<i>Hilary Douglas</i>	<i>Executive Director; Chief Operating Officer of ONS</i>	<i>Corporate Development Directorate</i>
<i>Karen Dunnell</i>	<i>Executive Director</i>	<i>Surveys and Administrative Sources Directorate</i>
<i>Jil Matheson</i>	<i>Executive Director</i>	<i>Economic and Social Reporting Directorate</i>
<i>Colin Mowl</i>	<i>Executive Director</i>	<i>Macroeconomics and Labour Market Directorate</i>
<i>Dennis Roberts</i>	<i>Executive Director</i>	<i>Registration Services</i>
<i>Cynthia Clark</i>	<i>Executive Director</i>	<i>Methodology Directorate</i>
<i>Joe Grice</i>	<i>Executive Director</i>	<i>Centre for Measurement of Government Activity</i>
<i>Mike Hughes</i>	<i>Corporate Director</i>	<i>National Statistics and Planning Group</i>
<i>Dayantha Joshua</i>	<i>Corporate Director</i>	<i>Information Management Group</i>
<i>Alf Oldman</i>	<i>Corporate Director</i>	<i>Interim Finance Director</i>
<i>Gwen Batchelor</i>	<i>Non-Executive Director</i>	<i>Formerly Treasury Services Finance Director, Abbey plc</i>
<i>Janet Finch</i>	<i>Non-Executive Director</i>	<i>Vice Chancellor Keele University</i>
<i>Sir Robert Culpin</i>	<i>Non-Executive Director</i>	<i>Formerly Second Permanent Secretary (HM Treasury)</i>

## Senior Civil Service Staff by pay band as at 1 March 2005

### Pay band Number of senior staff

National Statistician	1
3	1
2	16
1	42
<b>Total</b>	<b>60*</b>

\* includes three secondees (one pay band 1; two pay band 2) who are paid by their parent departments

For information, last year's table showed the number of Senior Civil Servants by salary band, not by pay band:

Last year's return:

## Senior Civil Service Salaries as at 1 December 2003

Pay band (£000s)	Number of senior staff	Pay band (£000s)	Number of senior staff
Below 50	0	75-80	2
50-55	3	80-85	4
55-60	10	85-90	3
60-65	12	90-95	1
65-70	8	125-130	1
70-75	6	135-140	1

If publishing these figures again this year, they are:

## Senior Civil Service Salaries as at 1 March 2005

Pay band (£000s)	Number of senior staff	Pay band (£000s)	Number of senior staff
Below 50	0	85-90	2
50-55	4	90-95	2
55-60	5	95-100	3
60-65	9	100-115	0
65-70	8	115-120	1
70-75	8	120-130	0
75-80	10	130-135	1
80-85	3	135-140	1

# Annex A

## Main Spending Plans Tables

**Table 1 Public Spending for the Office for National Statistics**

£ million	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
	Outturn	Outturn	Outturn	Outturn	Outturn	Estimated Outturn	Plans	Plans	Plans
<b>Consumption of resources:</b>									
Providing Statistical and Registration Services	101	147	205	131	134	158	167	167	167
<b>Total Resource Budget</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>167</b>
<i>of which:</i>									
Resource DEL	101	147	205	131	134	158	167	167	167
<b>Capital spending</b>									
Providing Statistical and Registration Services	8	8	5	13	17	33	28	28	28
<b>Total Capital Budget</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>28</b>
<i>of which:</i>									
Capital DEL	8	8	5	13	17	33	28	28	28
<b>Total Public Spending<sup>(1)</sup></b>	<b>100</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>173</b>

1) Total public spending calculated as the total of the resource budget plus the capital budget, less depreciation

**Table 2 Administration costs for the Office for National Statistics**

£ million	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
	Outturn	Outturn	Outturn	Outturn	Outturn	Estimated Outturn	Plans	Plans	Plans
<b>Gross Administration costs</b>									
Paybill	71	79	84	101	109	113	113	109	105
Other	59	102	158	63	66	89	89	93	97
<b>Total gross administration costs</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>202</b>
Related administration cost receipts	-29	-34	-37	-34	-41	-44	-36	-36	-36
<b>Total net administration costs</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>166</b>
<b>Analysis by activity</b>									
Providing Statistical and Registration Services									
<b>Total net administration costs</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>61</b>

**Table 3 Office for National Statistics – Capital Employed**

£ million	1999–00 Outturn	2000–01 Outturn	2001–02 Outturn	2002–03 Outturn	2003–04 Outturn	2004–05 Forecast	2005–06 Projected	2006–07 Projected	2007–08 Projected
<b>Fixed Assets:</b>	52	58	54	65	71	95	93	95	95
<i>of which:</i>									
Land and Buildings	37	42	44	49	49	54	50	53	51
Computers and Software	11	11	7	12	18	39	40	40	42
Other Plant and Machinery	5	5	4	4	4	2	2	2	2
<b>Current Assets</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Creditors (&lt;1year)</b>	<b>-3</b>	<b>-14</b>	<b>-13</b>	<b>-9</b>	<b>-19</b>	<b>-19</b>	<b>-19</b>	<b>-19</b>	<b>-19</b>
<b>Creditors (&gt;1year)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Provisions</b>	<b>-3</b>	<b>-2</b>	<b>-7</b>	<b>-2</b>	<b>-2</b>	<b>-1</b>	<b>-1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total Capital Employed</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>93</b>

Notes: Totals may not appear to sum due to rounding

**Table 4 Staff in Post**

Full-Time Equivalents	2000–01 actual	2001–02 actual	2002–03 actual	01/04/04 actual	01/04/05 (estimate)	01/04/06 (planned)	01/04/07 (planned)	01/04/08 (planned)
Main office staff (Note 1)	3,419	3,314	3,495	3,590	4,000	3,610	3,300	3,000
Interviewer field force	697	652	655	720	750	700	700	610
<b>Total ONS employees (Note 2)</b>	<b>4,116</b>	<b>3,966</b>	<b>4,150</b>	<b>4,310</b>	<b>4,750</b>	<b>4,310</b>	<b>4,000</b>	<b>3,610</b>

Note 1: Figures in this row are London, Newport, Titchfield and Southport staff; classified as civil servants in Cabinet Office Statistics.

Those for 2000–01 to 2002–03 are annual averages calculated in accordance with HM Treasury guidance on departmental reporting in force at the time. The 1 April 2004 figure is a figure for that specific date as published by Cabinet Office.

Note 2: Interviewer field force staff numbers were not reported for 2000–01 to 2002–03. They have been reported since 1/4/04 as a result of a decision to include interviewers as ONS staff following the introduction of new contracts governing their terms and conditions. Estimates for the earlier years are now included now for consistency purposes. These numbers are still subject to confirmation with H.M. Treasury.

Note 3: Increases in staff numbers during 2003–04 and 2004–05 were due to the staffing requirements of the modernisation programmes, and an increase in demand for certificate services. Both are short-term increases, and the latter also gives rise to increased income.

# Annex B

## Performance Management Framework

### Targets from the Spending Review 2004

All targets commence in April 2005. Work has started in all areas but at present it is too early to assess delivery against the targets agreed as part of the spending review. The targets are:

#### Targets

To leverage the benefits of investment in statistical modernisation and organisation transformation, as reflected by:

- The value of outputs per £ of cost increasing 20 per cent by March 2008, compared with 2003–04;
- The proportion of transactions with business completed electronically reaching 25 per cent by March 2008.

To modernise Civil Registration – *subject to parliamentary approval we will implement a fully web-enabled registration system, with approved government bodies having electronic access to:*

- New registrations, by September 2005;
- Post 1935 birth records, by June 2007;
- Post 1980 death records, by March 2008.

To implement the recommendations from the Allsopp Review of Statistics for Economic Policy Making:

- We will begin launching new surveys during 2006 in accordance with a plan for full delivery by 2009.
- We will create a Government Statistical Service presence in each region by March 2007.

To improve the quality and reliability of statistics relating to population, pensions, government output, and wealth and assets:

- We will complete population studies on at least five local councils and publish the findings by March 2008.
- We will develop and complete the fieldwork required for a mid-decade population benchmark study, with results to be published by the end of 2008.
- From 2005 we will produce annually a *Pension Trends* report pulling together for the first time a comprehensive set of statistics and analysis on UK pensions.
- We will implement the response to the Atkinson report on measuring Government output.
- We will develop and complete the fieldwork required for a comprehensive Wealth and Assets Survey, with results to be published in 2007.

To respond to the challenge of Sir Peter Gershon's Efficiency Review:

- We will deliver efficiencies, rising to £25m per year by 2007–08.

To respond to the challenge of Sir Michael Lyons's Relocation Review:

- We will relocate 850 jobs from London and the South East by March 2010, with 600 to be relocated by March 2008.

Extant targets from previous spending reviews	
Targets	Performance
<p>To publish all ONS statistics at the preannounced time, with revision levels consistent with agreed or published user delivery requirements.</p>	<p><b>Target 'almost fully met':</b></p> <p>All market sensitive outputs were delivered at the pre-announced time.</p> <p>For non-market sensitive outputs ONS also has a target that 100% of pre-announced publications meet their publication date. The last indicator (covering the period Oct-Dec) was slightly under target with 95% published at the pre-announced time (Region in Figures was delayed). The indicator for the year to date was better with 98% published on time.</p>
<p>To deliver all Service Level Agreement outputs to time, cost and service delivery standard.</p>	<p><b>Covers multiple targets – full assessment in the new financial year:</b></p> <p>ONS has a set of operational service level agreements with its key account customers including HM Treasury, Bank of England, Department of Health, Department for Trade and Industry and the National Assembly for Wales. It has a number of other agreements with other government departments. Where appropriate ONS is developing a single high level service level agreement for each department underpinning this with a raft of operational service level agreements.</p> <p>Two executive directors actively oversee management of these accounts.</p> <p>Reporting on Service Level Agreements will wherever appropriate be at the higher level to reduce the burden on customer departments and to facilitate better cross departmental assessment of service. Assessments are done annually and results will be reported in the Annual Report and Accounts. In addition ONS gathers anecdotal and operational data each month from its divisional directors who manage the operations to review progress over the year and to identify any potential issues.</p>

<p>To ensure the delivery of improved services that contribute to the delivery of other departments' Public Service Agreement targets.</p>	<p><b>Target 'on course':</b></p> <p>ONS statistics contribute to a wide range of government Public Service Agreement targets and overall performance in delivery of these is covered within the key account management framework (see Service Level Agreements above).</p> <p>In addition to the general modernisation work of ONS processes to improve analysis quality and product delivery (see the first target listed in the 2004 table above) ONS is developing regional statistics to support the governments neighbourhood renewal initiatives. The key targets are:</p> <p>1) the scope of the Neighbourhood Statistical (NeSS) data. The proportion of deprivation-related PSA targets that can be monitored at sub-Local Authority level using NeSS data is one of the key performance indicators. The baseline for this indicator has still to be determined, but around 45% of the priority information needs do now have some statistical outputs to use.</p> <p>2) the satisfaction of renewal practitioners with the quality of the NeSS service, functionality and data quality is another key performance indicator. The overall satisfaction rating has been measured at 83% in a telephone survey of 1,000 core users and potential users.</p>
<p>To improve the public perception of the integrity of National Statistics to the extent that the integrity of statistics is publicly recognised by the press, the Royal Statistical Society and the Statistics Commission.</p>	<p><b>Target very difficult to assess at this time:</b></p> <p>ONS continues to document its statistical procedures and processes in ways that demonstrate the openness and integrity of National Statistics – for example by identifying clearly when Ministers have pre-release access to statistics. At the same time we continue to write to the press when the integrity of our statistics is challenged. The key risk is that the achievement of this target, as written, does not lie solely in ONS's hands. ONS can produce high quality high integrity statistics, but that does not mean the reporting and reaction, and hence the perception, will necessarily always be positive.</p>

	<p>Recent survey work by ONS into the degree of public confidence in official statistics has demonstrated a variety of relevant indicators, in particular relating to the distinction between the perceived quality and the perceived integrity of statistics. As far as we can tell we are the first country in the world to do such research and this survey work is set to continue.</p> <p>Close ties with the Statistics Commission have been developed and our communications suggest they consider that in terms of quality and innovation ONS is comparable with the best in other countries, and in the lead in some respects. They do however criticise the planning arrangements to take account of user needs (or absence thereof); the frankness and helpfulness of written commentary; and the communication of messages to those who need them.</p> <p>We are scheduled to review the National Statistics Framework Document, which will provide us with an opportunity to revisit a number of issues raised by the Commission and others.</p>
<p>By March 2006 to deliver higher quality and noticeable business benefits through holding the major ONS statistical sources in a common statistical database and through using common processes, tools and practices.</p>	<p><b>Target 'on course to meet redefined objectives':</b></p> <p>ONS has successfully created an early version of a central ONS repository for data (CORD), which is fully supported by metadata, and has incorporated within this a set of standard statistical tools covering time series, estimation, disclosure and tabulation. Using CORD, the statistical tools and the new components, ONS has successfully demonstrated 'proof of concept' of the modernisation programme, using a prototype process of some functionality based on Labour Force Survey data (which is one of our more complex surveys). The metadata has however proven to be slightly more fragmented than expected.</p> <p>Work is underway to identify specific cost and statistical benefits using industry standard benefit realisation management techniques and full tracking metrics are being developed within the programme and ONS's governance reporting system.</p>

<p>By March 2006 the National Accounts and Labour Market Statistics will each be managed through an integrated set of standard statistical processes.</p>	<p><b>Target will be 'partially achieved':</b></p> <p>The National Accounts and Labour Market Statistics are key components of ONS's Statistical Modernisation Programme (SMP). There has been some slippage in the preliminary phase of SMP designed to establish proof of concept. As a result there has been some reduction in scope for what can now be delivered by March 2006. Alternative technical approaches to the development are now being explored, which may enable a more effective delivery programme. These technical options are being considered initially in the context of National Accounts and the Labour Force Survey to try to ensure delivery of working systems or sub-systems by March 2006 that will form major stepping stones to full delivery.</p>
<p>By March 2006 to provide an automated UK wide population estimates and projections capability.</p>	<p><b>Target 'on course':</b></p> <p>Progress against milestones is as follow</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governance framework: Governance arrangements are currently under active discussions with relevant departments and the devolved administrations.</li> <li>• NS Quality Review on International Migration: The Action plan was published on 2 January 2004 and work is proceeding on implementation.</li> <li>• Small area population estimates: Ward level small area population estimates will be published as experimental statistics on April 2005.</li> <li>• Quarterly population estimates: Completed. Quarterly population estimates for third quarter 2003 to third quarter 2004 were released on 14 December 2004 as experimental statistics. Now published on a regular basis.</li> </ul>

<p>Deliver through Neighbourhood Statistics the agreed statistical requirements for Neighbourhood renewal.</p>	<p><b>Target 'on course':</b></p> <p>The first version of the Neighbourhood Statistics website was launched in February 2001 and has been substantially developed and enhanced through subsequent releases.</p> <p>The website currently attracts over 1,000 visitors per day on average and has 9,000 registered users. Highlights during 2004–05 have seen the Programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop, agree and release the new standard statistical geography termed 'Super Output Areas', which represents the foundation upon which consistent, neighbourhood level statistics will be provided. Census 2001 outputs, DWP Benefits Statistics and the ODPM commissioned 2004 Indices of Deprivation are all now available in this form.</li> <li>• Develop a substantial new release of the Neighbourhood Statistics website for release during spring 2005. As well as offering considerable enhancements to the service, this latest version migrates Neighbourhood Statistics into the Oracle / Java technology which ONS has selected as its strategic platform for IT development.</li> <li>• Develop and distribute the NeSS data suppliers toolkit. This comprehensive toolkit enables data suppliers to provide data in the appropriate format by providing them with address matching and cleaning, geographic referencing, disclosure control, aggregation, metadata and formatting tools. So far 70 copies have been distributed to data suppliers across central government.</li> <li>• Significantly improve the statistical content. The website contains approximately 150 datasets and this continues to grow, although there is still much to do in some areas, especially the crime and health domains.</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop methods for estimating small area statistics where the surveys and administrative systems cannot provide the detail. Small area income estimates and small area population estimates are amongst the first applications of these methods.</li> </ul>
<p>By March 2005 to provide direct access, links to or direction to all official statistics of the UK via the National Statistics (NS) website.</p>	<p><b>Target 'minor slippage':</b></p> <p>In order for ONS to provide an effective 'one stop shop' for official statistics the following will need to be implemented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensure all NS releases are covered by National Statistics Online.</li> <li>• introduce a list of all NS releases.</li> <li>• the new corporate FAST search engine. This will index all of NS Online, specifically StatBase, including departmental government metadata and revised Press Release system that integrates 'Updates'.</li> <li>• web metrics software tagging for measuring usage and surveys and survey of effectiveness.</li> </ul> <p>All data releases have been identified and providers contacted to identify links and data for loading into NS Online. A major effort is currently underway to upload all links and all identified National Statistics data sets that have been provided by ONS or other government departments will be available in NS Online by the end of April 2005.</p> <p>In addition, with the increased volume of data available, ONS have sourced and implemented a new more efficient search engine for the website to improve usability.</p>
<p>By March 2006 for the same relative baseline investment to have produced a 25 per cent increase in statistical outputs compared with 2002–03.</p>	<p>This is related now to the SR2004 targets (relating to SMP statistical benefits and the Gershon targets).</p>
<p>ONS will agree with the Minister annual plans for compliance costs, which will include targets that recognise the balance between the need for reliable information and the burden on suppliers.</p>	<p>This is an annual target and will be fully reported on in the new financial year. For the last financial year ONS exceeded target and continues to find ways to minimise the load for our suppliers.</p>

By March 2006, subject to Parliamentary approval of the legislative process required to implement the changes in the White Paper ' <i>Civil Registration: Vital Change</i> ' to have developed a system for web enabled registration of all key life events.	<b>Target 'on course':</b>  Despite failure to progress legislation the web based system is on track for delivery in late 2005.
Births and deaths are registered within the timescales set down in legislation:  <i>Percentage of births registered within the prescribed time for first registration (Prescribed time – 42 days of event – target of 99%)</i>  <i>Percentage of deaths registered within the prescribed time (Prescribed time – 5 days of event, except where the death is referred to a coroner-target of 95%)</i>	This is an annual target and will be fully reported on in the new financial year.  This is an annual target and will be fully reported on in the new financial year.
The registration of births does not fall below 99.9% of all births.	This is an annual target and will be fully reported on in the new financial year. For the last financial year ONS achieved target with 99.99%.
Ninety-three per cent of Principal Registration Officers performing satisfactorily or better.	This is an annual target and will be fully reported on in the new financial year. For the last financial year ONS achieved target with 96.5%.
ONS Casework processed:  <i>Urgent within 5 days (Target 99%)</i>  <i>Non-urgent within 20 days (Target 95%)</i>	<b>Target met</b> – achieved 99.3% for the first three quarters 2004/05.  <b>Target met</b> – achieved 99.6% for the first three quarters 2004/05.
Post or have available for personal collection (at the Family Records Centre only) applications for certified copies of birth, marriage and death entries received by personal application, post, electronically or by telephone within the specified delivery target for the service (details of all the services are on the National Statistics website).	<b>Target not met</b> – achieved 74.4% for the first three quarters 2004/05. This is an improvement on last financial year's achievement of 69.9% despite continuing record levels of requests.

<p>To meet targets to improve the provision of statistics to the European Commission as set out in the UK action plan.</p>	<p><b>Target 'on course':</b></p> <p>The UK has continually shifting targets for the quality and timeliness of data provided to Eurostat. Of the set of Principal European Economic Indicators, regarded as most important by key users of economic statistics, the UK currently meets agreed timeliness targets for 12 of the 19 indicators. Work is underway to meet the remaining targets.</p>
<p>Pay all bills promptly (Target 100%).</p>	<p><b>Target 'on course':</b></p> <p>Achieved 99.7% (to end of January 2005) of bills paid on time.</p> <p>For the remainder of the year we will continue to press for better performance and aim to report an achievement of 100% in the Notes to the 2004–05 Resource Account.</p>
<p>To answer public enquiries about statistical activities within 10 days (Target 99%).</p>	<p><b>Target met 100%.</b></p>
<p>Achieve levels of ill health retirement consistent with or better than 3.72 retirements per 1,000 employees (By 2005).</p>	<p><b>Target 'on course':</b></p> <p>Achieved a rate of under two ill health retirements per 1,000 employees during 2003/04.</p>





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