

# Interim Statistical Work Programme and Policy Statement

*This is an interim statistical work programme and policy statement for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). A full statistical work programme and policy statement will be published here during Summer 2026 following live work to take stock of and evaluate statistical processes and publications in line with the new edition of the Code of Practice for Statistics 3.0.*

## 1. Introduction and purpose

This document sets out the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's commitments for the production, management, dissemination and development of official statistics.

MHCLG produces official statistics to support public understanding, inform public debate, and enable decision-making by government, Parliament, local authorities, businesses, the voluntary and community sector, researchers, the media and the public. Our statistics cover a wide range of departmental responsibilities, including housing and homelessness, local government finance, deprivation, planning and land use, building safety, fire and rescue, and related policy areas.

This policy acts as an umbrella statement, bringing together the policies and practices that MHCLG is required to publish in relation to the production of official statistics. It should be read alongside individual statistical releases, methodology documents, quality reports, pre-release access lists, revisions policies and other supporting material published on GOV.UK.

It applies to all staff involved in the production, analysis, communication, governance and use of official statistics within MHCLG.

This is an interim statement. MHCLG is currently strengthening its departmental statistical governance through a Task and Finish Group developing a departmental playbook for statistics. This work will support greater consistency in the production, release, quality assurance, communication and governance of statistics across the department. It will be complemented by a regular stocktake of MHCLG statistical products, carried out every two years, to review our portfolio, assess user needs, identify improvement priorities and support compliance with the Code of Practice for Statistics.

Over summer 2026, MHCLG will publish a fuller statistical work programme setting out our planned priorities, improvements and development activity in more detail.

## 2. Our commitment to the Code of Practice for Statistics

MHCLG is committed to complying with the Code of Practice for Statistics and its core principles of Trustworthiness, Quality and Value. The Code sets the standards producers of official statistics should meet so that published statistics serve the public good, are high quality, and are produced by trustworthy organisations.

We ensure that our statistical outputs are:

- produced and published independently of political influence;
- based on appropriate data, robust methods and proportionate quality assurance;
- transparent about strengths, limitations, uncertainty and appropriate use;
- released in an orderly, open and accessible way;
- responsive to the needs of users and the wider public;
- clear about their status, including whether they are accredited official statistics, official statistics or official statistics in development.

The Department's Head of Profession for Statistics provides professional leadership for official statistics within MHCLG and supports compliance with the Code across the department.

## 3. Governance and decision-making for official statistics

Decisions about the content, methods, timing and presentation of official statistics are taken by statisticians, independently of Ministers and policy teams, in line with the Code of Practice for Statistics.

MHCLG has professional oversight arrangements in place for statistical production, including:

- oversight by the Head of Profession for Statistics;
- senior analytical leadership of analytical divisions;
- internal quality assurance and peer review arrangements;
- escalation routes for issues relating to the Code, statistical quality or statistical propriety;
- engagement with the Office for Statistics Regulation where appropriate;
- documented decisions on significant changes to statistical outputs, methods or release arrangements.

The department's developing statistics playbook will set out clearer expectations for teams on roles and responsibilities, production standards, quality assurance, release processes, user engagement and handling of statistical issues.

## 4. Interim statistical work programme

MHCLG maintains a broad portfolio of statistics supporting departmental policy and public accountability. Our current statistical outputs include regular and ad hoc publications across themes such as:

- housing supply and housing stock;
- homelessness and rough sleeping;
- affordable housing and social housing;
- local government finance, including council tax, business rates, revenue expenditure and capital expenditure;
- planning applications, land use, green belt and related planning statistics;
- deprivation and the English Indices of Deprivation;
- building safety and remediation;
- fire and rescue statistics;
- ad hoc analysis responding to emerging evidence needs.

In the interim period, our statistical work programme is focused on four priorities:

### **4.1 Maintaining high-quality core statistical outputs**

We will continue to produce and publish MHCLG's regular statistical outputs in accordance with the Code of Practice for Statistics, pre-announced release dates, published methodologies and established quality assurance processes.

This includes maintaining clear release schedules, publishing supporting data where appropriate, and ensuring users have access to relevant metadata, quality information and contact details.

### **4.2 Strengthening departmental statistical governance**

The Task and Finish Group is developing a departmental playbook for statistics. This will provide practical guidance for statistical teams and wider departmental colleagues on:

- applying the Code of Practice in MHCLG contexts;
- release planning and publication management;
- quality assurance expectations;
- handling revisions, corrections and methodological changes;
- user engagement and public value;
- communication of uncertainty and limitations;
- use of statistics by Ministers, officials and communications teams;
- escalation routes for potential breaches or propriety concerns.

### **4.3 Reviewing the statistical portfolio**

MHCLG will undertake a structured stocktake of all statistical products every two years. This will assess:

- whether each product continues to meet user needs;
- whether frequency, format and content remain appropriate;
- whether methods and data sources remain robust;
- whether outputs are accessible, reusable and clearly explained;
- whether any products should be improved, rationalised, developed, paused or discontinued;
- whether emerging policy areas require new or enhanced statistical outputs.

The first stocktake under this strengthened approach will inform the fuller statistical work programme to be published over summer 2026.

### **4.4 Improving transparency, accessibility and user value**

We will continue to improve how users find, understand and reuse MHCLG statistics. This includes making outputs accessible, publishing data in open and reusable formats where appropriate, improving explanatory commentary, and ensuring users can provide feedback on statistical products.

MHCLG also supports open data through platforms such as Open Data Communities, which provides access to departmental data and tools.

## **5. Transparency and orderly release**

MHCLG publishes official statistics in an orderly, timely and transparent manner. Release dates are pre-announced on GOV.UK and official statistics are released simultaneously to all users, except where limited pre-release access is permitted under the relevant legislation and the Code.

We will ensure that:

- statistical releases are pre-announced wherever required;
- publication dates are kept up to date;
- changes to release dates are explained transparently;
- statistics are clearly labelled according to their status;
- supporting data and methodology are published alongside releases where appropriate;
- users can easily identify contact points for queries or feedback.

Pre-release access to official statistics is limited, controlled and granted only where it is demonstrably necessary. Any such access complies with UK statistical legislation and the Code of Practice, and details are published transparently.

## 6. Data access, confidentiality and security

MHCLG protects the confidentiality of individuals, households, businesses and organisations whose data we use. We comply with data protection legislation and apply appropriate disclosure control to statistical outputs before publication.

Data used for statistical purposes are handled securely throughout their lifecycle. Access is restricted to authorised staff, and data are stored, transferred and processed through systems that meet relevant government security standards.

Where MHCLG uses administrative data, survey data, operational data or data supplied by local authorities and other organisations, we will be clear about:

- the source of the data;
- the legal or operational basis for collection;
- the coverage and completeness of the data;
- quality assurance undertaken;
- limitations users should consider when interpreting the statistics.

## 7. Quality assurance and methods

All official statistics are subject to proportionate quality assurance, reflecting the data sources, methods, complexity, sensitivity and risk associated with the output.

MHCLG will be transparent about the strengths and limitations of its statistics, including issues relating to data quality, coverage, uncertainty, comparability, timeliness and coherence with other sources.

We will publish clear information about statistical methods, data sources and processing.

Where methods change, we will explain:

- what has changed;
- why the change has been made;
- the expected impact on the statistics;
- any implications for comparability over time;
- whether historic data have been revised or should be interpreted differently.

The developing departmental playbook will strengthen consistency in how teams document methods, conduct quality assurance and communicate uncertainty to users.

## 8. User engagement and public value

MHCLG is committed to producing statistics that meet user needs and serve the public good.

We engage with users through a range of routes, including publication contact points, consultations, feedback received through GOV.UK, engagement with local authorities and data suppliers, analytical networks, policy colleagues, researchers, parliamentary interest and engagement with OSR.

We aim to ensure that our statistics:

- address priority public and policy questions;
- support democratic accountability and public debate;
- are relevant to users' decisions;
- are clearly explained and accessible;
- are available in formats that support reuse;
- are reviewed periodically to ensure continued value.

As part of the biennial stocktake, MHCLG will review evidence on user needs across its statistical portfolio and identify where outputs could be improved, better explained, developed or rationalised.

## 9. Accessibility, clarity and communication

MHCLG is committed to making statistics accessible and easy to understand.

We will:

- use clear, plain language;
- provide appropriate commentary and context;
- explain key trends and limitations;
- use charts, maps and data visualisation where these support understanding;
- publish supporting data in open and reusable formats where appropriate;
- meet accessibility standards for published content;
- ensure statistical messages are impartial, accurate and proportionate.

We will continue to improve the accessibility and usability of statistical outputs, including spreadsheets, charts, metadata and explanatory material, drawing on good practice across the Government Statistical Service and Analysis Function.

## 10. Corrections, revisions and orderly change

Where errors are identified in published statistics, MHCLG acts promptly and transparently to correct them.

We distinguish between:

- **scheduled revisions**, where updated or more complete data are incorporated as part of normal production;
- **methodological revisions**, where improved methods or sources are introduced;
- **corrections**, where an error has been identified after publication.

When corrections or revisions are made, we will explain the nature of the change, the reason for it, the scale of impact and any implications for users.

Changes to statistical series, methods, definitions, publication frequency or format will be managed in an orderly way. Where changes are significant, users will be informed in advance where possible and given enough information to understand the effect on interpretation and comparability.

## 11. Use of statistics by Ministers and officials

MHCLG expects all public references to official statistics by Ministers, officials and communications teams to be accurate, appropriate and consistent with the Code of Practice for Statistics.

Public use of statistics should:

- be clear about the source of the figures;
- use the latest available data where appropriate;
- avoid selective or misleading presentation;
- reflect relevant limitations and uncertainty;
- distinguish clearly between official statistics, management information, modelling, forecasts and wider analysis;
- support equal access to statistical information.

The Head of Profession for Statistics provides advice on the appropriate use of statistics and may intervene where there are concerns about misuse or misinterpretation

## 12. Staff capability and training

MHCLG ensures that staff involved in statistical production and communication have the appropriate skills and capability.

This includes:

- professional statistical expertise within analytical teams;

- access to Government Statistical Service learning and guidance;
- internal support from senior statisticians and the Head of Profession for Statistics;
- clear expectations on roles, responsibilities and quality assurance;
- guidance for non-analytical colleagues involved in the use or communication of statistics.

The departmental statistics playbook will provide a practical resource for staff producing, using or communicating statistics, helping to embed consistent standards across MHCLG.

### 13. Continuous improvement and compliance

MHCLG regularly reviews its statistical outputs and practices to ensure continued compliance with the Code of Practice and to respond to evolving user needs, data developments and regulatory expectations.

Our approach to continuous improvement includes:

- regular review of individual statistical outputs;
- engagement with users and data suppliers;
- professional oversight by the Head of Profession for Statistics;
- learning from OSR guidance and regulatory findings;
- periodic portfolio-level stocktakes;
- action planning through the statistical work programme;
- sharing good practice across analytical teams.

OSR guidance highlights the importance of producer organisations self-evaluating their statistical practice against the Code, identifying strengths and areas for development, and using this to support practical improvement planning.

### 14. Publication, review and next steps

This policy is publicly available on the MHCLG website and will be reviewed periodically to reflect changes to the Code of Practice for Statistics, OSR guidance, departmental arrangements and user needs.

This interim statement will be supplemented over summer 2026 by a fuller MHCLG statistical work programme. That programme will draw on:

- ongoing work conducted by a new Task and Finish Group to develop a departmental statistics playbook;
- a stocktake of MHCLG statistical products;
- regulatory expectations from OSR;

- departmental priorities and emerging evidence needs.

The fuller programme will set out our statistical priorities, planned improvements and development activity in more detail.

Users are welcome to contact MHCLG with comments about how we meet the standards of the Code of Practice for Statistics here: [enquiries.officialstatistics@communities.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries.officialstatistics@communities.gov.uk).

Our statistical practice is regulated by the Office for Statistics Regulation. OSR sets the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics that producers of official statistics should follow.