

PRESS RELEASE

Statistics Commission

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STATISTICS COMMISSION HIGHLIGHTS ISSUES FOR CONSULTATION

The Treasury today published *Independence for Statistics: A Consultation Document* which addresses plans for legislation following an announcement by the Chancellor in November 2005. The Statistics Commission welcomes the consultation and will be making a substantive response in due course.

Commission chairman, David Rhind said: "The responsibilities, accountability and constitution of the proposed Governing Board will be crucial, particularly if, as we understand, the Board will be expected to subsume the role of the existing Statistics Commission.

"We have already set out in correspondence with HM Treasury a number of key points that we believe the legislation will need to embrace and we will be considering the current proposals against these criteria:

- The new governance arrangements should relate to **all** official statistics – not just those selected by government departments.
- The National Statistician should play a central, UK-wide, role and have the authority to create a statutory code of practice, subject to Parliamentary approval, which would be binding on **all** departments and agencies which produce official figures.
- The Governing Board should be able to commission investigations at its own discretion, audit compliance with the code of practice and report to Parliament

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in relation to the statistical activities of **all** departments. It should also be responsible for approving annual plans covering all the statistical activities of government.

- Planning and funding arrangements for official statistics should be transparent and coherent and subject to independent audit.
- The arrangements for the devolved administrations should reflect the value of consistent information across the United Kingdom whilst supporting a focus on meeting local requirements where that is appropriate.

“We will be consulting widely in the weeks ahead, in parallel to the Treasury. We also intend to host a public seminar on 17 May to inform the Commission’s formal response to the current consultation exercise.”

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NOTES TO EDITORS

1. The Statistics Commission was set up in June 2000 to advise on the quality, quality assurance and priority setting for official statistics, and on the procedures designed to deliver statistical integrity, to help ensure official statistics are trustworthy and responsive to public needs. It is independent of Ministers and of the producers of official statistics. More information about the Commission’s role and work is on its website www.statscom.org.uk.
2. The Commission reported on its own proposals for statistics legislation in May 2004. Our report *Legislation to Build Trust in Statistics* can be found at: www.statscom.org.uk/media_pdfs/reports/LegislationToBuildTrust.pdf
Printed copies are available from the Commission’s offices.
3. The Treasury’s consultation document can be found on the Treasury’s website at: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/budget/budget_06/other_documents/bud_bud06_odstatistics.cfm.
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