

# Annex 1

## Extracts from National Statistics Code of Practice and Protocols

## Introduction

71. The National Statistics Code of Practice and Protocols, launched in 2002, sets out the principles and standards that official statisticians are expected to follow and uphold.<sup>56</sup> This Annex presents extracts from the Code and Protocols that are relevant to the accessibility of statistics.

## National Statistics Code of Practice

72. The Code of Practice states that *National Statistics will be:*

- *valued for relevance, integrity, quality and accessibility*
- *produced in the interests of all citizens by protecting confidentiality, and balancing the needs of users against the burden on providers*
- *enhanced through integration, accumulation and innovation; and by efficiency in costs, and fairness in prices.*

73. Three of these principles are most directly relevant to accessibility of statistics:

- *Relevance: National Statistics will inform significant decisions in government, business and the wider community, and in so doing contribute to the quality of national life.*
- *Quality: National Statistics will be fit for purpose and of high quality.*
- *Accessibility: Access to National Statistics will be fair and open.*

## Code of Practice Protocols

74. There are twelve Code of Practice Protocols that set out how those involved in the production of National Statistics carry out their responsibilities. Three of these are of direct relevance to the accessibility of statistics:

- Protocol on Data Presentation, Dissemination and Pricing
- Protocol on Quality Management and
- Protocol on Customer Service and User Consultation.

75. We have selected relevant extracts from these protocols and these are presented in the sections that follow. Three dots (...) denotes where we have omitted text. The full Protocols are available on the National Statistics website.

<sup>56</sup> The National Statistics Code of Practice (2002) and protocols can be found at: [http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about/national\\_statistics/cop/default.asp](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about/national_statistics/cop/default.asp)

## EXTRACTS FROM THE PROTOCOL ON DATA PRESENTATION, DISSEMINATION AND PRICING

**1. National Statistics will be made accessible to the widest possible community, and where appropriate with a choice of format, helping users to get what they want simply and quickly.**

...

b) The web will be the primary means of providing general access to National Statistics.

i. When developing new products, and when reviewing existing products, producers of National Statistics will consider all ways and means of making statistics accessible, and where practicable, will give high priority to dissemination on the web.

ii. The National Statistician will work with Heads of Profession to provide user-friendly and coordinated entry-points to the entire range of outputs disseminated as National Statistics.

iii. Content will be organised as much as possible so that it can be easily understood and easily found.

iv. Producers of National Statistics will encourage comparative analysis and help to provide context to any particular output, through facilities such as metadata, links to related information, and cross-referencing to glossaries and background material.

...

**2. Presentation of National Statistics will be integrated and will focus on users' needs.**

a) Producers of National Statistics will endeavour to integrate and harmonise their publications and products in accordance with users' needs and give users easy access to related statistics through common gateways or interlinked websites.

b) Producers of National Statistics will respond to changing expectations about access to outputs. Formats, media, content and support materials will be regularly reviewed, and informed by an understanding of users' current and future needs and the standards set out in the *National Statistics Code of Practice*.

**EXTRACTS FROM THE PROTOCOL ON DATA  
PRESENTATION, DISSEMINATION AND PRICING  
(continued)**

c) Within the guidelines of departmental policy and the *National Statistics Code of Practice*, producers will exercise professional judgement to decide on the types of presentation – including commentary, analysis and interpretation – best suited to the range of users for a particular output.

**3. Information will be presented objectively, in line with professional standards, and in ways that make the statistics clear and useful.**

...

iv. Where useful and appropriate, presentation of data should include analysis and background information on methodology, quality, trends, etc to aid understanding of data.

...

vi. Statistical presentation and commentary will be adapted, wherever practical, to suit the different needs of the various communities and audiences likely to be interested in a particular output.

b) Consistent departmental formats will be applied to released outputs, including representations such as graphs, tables and maps.

i. Producers of National Statistics will follow departmental house-style guides and refer to appropriate best practice when presenting numerical and graphical information.

...

**6. Pricing will comply with legislation and wider government policy, and will provide fair value.**

...

i. Headline National Statistics outputs and other information of broad and general interest will be free on the internet.

## EXTRACTS FROM THE PROTOCOL ON QUALITY MANAGEMENT

...

### **3. National Statistics will meet the needs of government, business and the community, within available resources.**

Producers of National Statistics will have effective mechanisms in place to help them understand the key uses of their outputs, and the key areas of emerging demand and unmet need. In particular, producers of National Statistics will:

a) identify and consult key users to gain an understanding of their needs and to help determine priorities;

...

d) develop concepts, and design outputs, that are relevant to users' needs and intended uses, but that also take account of the relationship between quality and cost;

e) ensure that outputs are accessible and clearly presented to users;

...

### **4. Knowledge of National Statistics will be sustained by quality measures, regularly published.**

...

c) quality measures will help users to understand better the strengths and limitations, interpretation and appropriate use of the data, and will enable producers to demonstrate changes in the quality of outputs;

d) where practicable, the presentation of information on quality will be tailored to meet the needs of different types of users, with more comprehensive quality reports prepared for 'expert users';

e) guidance will be provided to users on the interpretation of quality measures.

**EXTRACTS FROM THE PROTOCOL ON QUALITY  
MANAGEMENT (*continued*)**

...

**8. Processes and methods used to produce National Statistics will be fully documented.**

a) National Statistics will be readily accessible through the web. They will be well described and supported by published documentation on statistical methods and processes which is easy to access and use;

b) documentation will be sufficiently detailed to allow users to assess fitness for particular purposes;

...

## EXTRACTS FROM THE PROTOCOL ON CUSTOMER SERVICE AND USER CONSULTATION

### Customer service

...

#### **2. Access to National Statistics will be made as easy as possible.**

a) Producers of National Statistics will provide facilities which strive to ensure easy, user-friendly access to National Statistics for everyone, including new and non-specialist customers.

b) In addition, the National Statistician will:

...

ii. Provide online services, continuously available, where information will be set out to meet the needs of regular, professional users as well as casual users and the interested public.

...

#### **3. Organisations producing customer feedback.**

...

c) Producers of National Statistics will make regular assessments of customer satisfaction focusing on key products and activities.

...

iii. Users will be consulted to assess the relevance of products.

## EXTRACTS FROM THE PROTOCOL ON CUSTOMER SERVICE AND USER CONSULTATION (*continued*)

### User Consultation

#### **1. User consultation will be an integral part of the statistical process.**

An open culture involving genuine and effective user consultation is fundamental to strengthening public confidence in National Statistics. Producers should develop a clear view of who their users are, what are their interests, and how their needs can be met.

...

#### **3. Engagement with users will aim to be focused, scaled and inclusive.**

a) Producers of National Statistics will recognise the wide diversity in the user community and the fact that customer groups have differing needs and resources and differing degree of access to the Internet.