

# **Title: Minutes of SDSSC Meeting held on 13 January 2011**

**Confidentiality status:** For information

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**Authors:** Science Secretariat

**Background information:** Minutes for ratification

**Action for members:** Discussion

## Summary of Actions

1. **Chris Kershaw** to provide contact details of Jouni Kuha, the RSS Social Statistics Section Chair, and **Mike Hough** to provide contact details of BSC colleagues who may be able to provide nominations for SDSSC members. **To be complete by 1 April 2011.**
2. **David Blunt** to re-circulate to members the part of the updated ministerial code that includes guidance on statistical propriety. **Action complete.**
3. **Secretariat** to check that the updated SDSSC website contains the committee's terms of reference, members list, and committee reports and to send updated website to members. **Action complete.**
4. **Iain Williams** to contact the analysts on the Anti-social Behaviour Steering Group to invite them to discuss their work on the policing antisocial behaviour trials with members of the Committee. **Action complete.**
5. **Secretariat** to circulate to members a link to the Home Office Business Plan 2011-2015. **Action complete.**
6. **David Blunt** to circulate to members guidance issued by the National Statistician in December 2010 on the use of Administrative or Management Information. **To be complete by 1 June 2011.**
7. **John Flatley** to circulate to members a paper detailing HO plans to test cheaper modes of collecting BCS data which might deliver savings in 2012/13. **To be complete by 1 May.**
8. **Members** to send to Iain Williams comments to feed into the SDSSC's response to the UKSA Assessment of Home Office Crime Statistics. **Action complete.**
9. **Secretariat** to circulate Home Office Press Release guidance to members. **To be complete by 10 February 2011.**
10. **Brian Francis** to update the Committee's report on the localisation of crime statistics based on the Committee's discussions and circulate the amended report to members. **To be complete by 15 March**
11. **Members** to send to the secretariat ideas for potential future areas of work for the SDSSC. **To be complete by 15 April 2011.**
12. **Professor Mike Hough** to circulate details of the Criminal Justice Network's conference in June. **To be complete by 1 May.**

## Home Office Surveys, Design and Statistics Sub-Committee

### **Minutes of the eleventh meeting of the Home Office Surveys, Design and Statistics Sub-Committee held on 13 January 2011**

Present - Charles Lound (*Chair, Office for National Statistics*)  
Professor Sheila Bird (*Medical Research Biostatistics Unit, Cambridge University*)  
Professor Brian Francis (*Lancaster University*)  
Professor Mike Hough (*King's College London*)

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David Blunt (*Home Office Chief Statistician*)  
John Flatley (*Home Office Statistics, Head of Crime Surveys*)  
Dr Chris Kershaw (*Home Office Statistics, Head of Policing Statistics*)

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Dr Iain Williams (*Home Office Science Secretariat*)  
Smita Kaur (*Secretariat*)

Apologies - No apologies were received for this meeting.

#### **Welcome and Introductions:**

1. Charles Lound opened the meeting by welcoming members and congratulated Professor Sheila Bird on her receipt of an OBE for services to social sciences.
2. The Chair advised members that Professor Antony Fielding has stepped down from the committee due to ongoing health problems. The secretariat is currently liaising with the Royal Statistical Society to find a replacement chair.
3. Professor Mike Hough advised members that he would be retiring from the Committee in July 2010.
4. Iain Williams advised members that committee members are selected from nominations put forward from scientific learned societies. Members agreed to provide the secretariat with contact details of representatives of relevant statistical bodies who may be able to provide suitable nominations.

**[Action: *Chris Kershaw* to provide contact details of Jouni Kuha, the RSS Social Statistics Section Chair, and *Mike Hough* to provide contact details of BSC colleagues who may be able to provide nominations for SDSSC members. *To be complete by 1 April*].**

5. Members agreed to the following amendment to the minutes:  
P. 4 (para. 14) to read: ...Two of the other measures screened out potential childish behaviour and incidents at school that would be

unlikely to either overly worry parents or teachers or concern the police’.

6. Members confirmed the minutes of the last meeting.

### **Update of Actions:**

7. Iain Williams provided an update of the actions from the last meeting. David Blunt circulated the Ministerial Code which had been updated to include guidance on statistical propriety on 12 August. David Blunt agreed to re-circulate the link to the guidance.

**[Action: David Blunt** to re-circulate to members the part of the updated ministerial code that includes guidance on statistical propriety. **Action complete]**

8. John Flatley circulated a link to the RDS Crime webpage that includes links to the police recorded crime webpage, and the secretariat circulated to members links to the archived SDSSC webpage on 21 July.

9. The SDSSC webpage, which was archived following the election, has now been updated. Members suggested that the secretariat should ensure that standing documents such as the committee’s members list, terms of reference and any of the committee’s reports that were on the archived site should be added to the updated page for ease of access for those viewing the site. The updated page will be circulated to members.

**[Action: Secretariat** to check that the updated SDSSC website contains the committee’s terms of reference, members list, and committee reports and to send updated website to members. **Action complete.].**

10. Professor Brian Francis tabled an updated version of the localisation report. This was discussed as a separate agenda item.

11. Members agreed that the action to draft a letter to the Home Office Permanent Secretary regarding the recommendations of the UKSA’s report ‘Overcoming Barriers to Trust in Crime Statistics: England and Wales’ would be deferred.

12. Members referred to the January launch of the trialling by eight police forces of a new approach to tackling antisocial behaviour. The approach is based on five key principles: creating an effective call handling system; introducing risk assessment tools to quickly identify the most vulnerable victims; installation of IT systems to share information between agencies, agreeing a protocol across all local agencies setting out how they will manage cases and engaging with the community.

13. Members commented that they would like to have the opportunity to hear more about the trials from Home Office analysts involved. The secretariat agreed to contact the analysts on the Anti-social Behaviour Steering

Group to invite them to discuss their work with members of the Committee.

**[Action: *Iain Williams* to contact the analysts on the Anti-social Behaviour Steering Group to invite them to discuss their work on the policing antisocial behaviour trials with members of the Committee. *Action complete*].**

#### **Home Office Business Plan:**

14. Iain Williams advised members that in November 2010, the Home Office Business Plan (2011-2015) was published, setting out in detail the scale of the reforms that the government is undertaking. This includes the monthly production of 'street-level' local crime data. This supports the work undertaken by the SDSSC on the localisation of crime statistics.
15. A full range of datasets will be published on the Home Office website including street-level crime data, antisocial behaviour by type and criminal justice area, details of police arrests, numbers of drug seizures and crimes where a knife or gun has been used to commit an offence.
16. The Home Office Business Plan is currently on the Home Office website.

**[Action: *Secretariat* to circulate to members a link to the Home Office Business Plan. *Action complete*.]**

#### **Chief Statistician's Update:**

17. David Blunt provided an update of events since the last meeting. A number of national statistics publications have been released since July 2010. These include the Annual and Quarterly Control of Immigration Statistics (August 2010), Quarterly Crime Statistics (October 2010), Police Powers under the Terrorism Act 2000 (October 2010) and Quarterly Control of Immigration (November 2010). The latter two releases were accompanied by independent press conferences.
18. In November 2010, a summary of the responses to the consultation on the Experimental Statistics from the British Crime Survey (BCS) extension to children aged 10-15 was published. No consensus was reached regarding the best measure of victimisation of children and further consideration of these issues will be given as part of the Home Office response to the recommendations in the UKSA's report.
19. The National Centre for Social Research's (NatCen) report of the review of BCS methodology that was carried out following concerns raised by the SDSSC, was published on 21 October. One of the issues highlighted in the report was the need to review existing non-response modelling to adjust for any possible non-response bias. A non-response model which makes use of data about sample addresses from existing sources is

currently being developed, with proposals being brought back to the Committee for their consideration.

20. In May 2010, the UK Statistics Authority published its report 'Overcoming Barriers to Trust in Crime Statistics: England and Wales'. The Home Office response is expected to be published in late January as part of the latest quarterly crime statistics release. Members agreed that their proposed letter to the Permanent Secretary would be drafted and sent after publication of the ministerial response to the report. The letter will incorporate the Committee's response to the report.
21. The National Statistician issued further guidance on the use of administrative or management information in December 2010. The main changes from the first edition include more explicit reference to the role of statisticians in helping to promote transparency and clarification that, in exceptional circumstances where management information or datasets that cover similar ground to official statistics are used to make public statements, the advice of the statistical Head of Profession should be sought and followed to ensure that planned official statistics or broader public trust in official statistics are not undermined.  
  
**[Action: *David Blunt* to circulate to members guidance issued by the National Statistician in December 2010 on the use of Administrative or Management Information. *To be complete by 1 June 2011*].**
22. A Migration Statistics Forum has recently been established with selected key users invited to participate from academia, policy and research organisations and Other Government Departments. The Forum have discussed draft proposals to develop the publication of migration-related statistics by the Home Office and the coordination of migration related publications across departments. These proposals were broadly welcomed and consultation with the publications' users on more detailed plans will be sought in February. A dependency of this project is the completion of the development of the RDS website.
23. Budgetary and resource constraints will have an impact on the statistical work the Home Office can undertake in the future. Any significant changes to the Home Office Statistics work plan, particularly any major changes proposed to National Statistics, will require a public consultation.
24. The BCS contract is being extended for a year in advance of contract re-tendering for 2012/13 and beyond, and the negotiation on the contact extension is considering options to reduce costs in 2011/12 without significantly affecting the overall quality of national estimates. Participation in some international crime and criminal justice groups and outputs, and participation in Government Statistical Society committees will have to be scaled back.
25. It is hoped that a public consultation will be launched at the end of January/early February seeking user feedback on these proposals, during which the committee will be given an opportunity to comment.

## **Crime Statistics:**

26. John Flatley advised members of plans to carry out a feasibility study of using cheaper modes of acquiring data for the BCS which might deliver savings in 2012/13 and beyond.
27. While face-to-face interviews will try to be preserved, follow up methods to be tested include interviews via telephone or via email. These methods will be used to acquire key attitudinal data.
28. Members offered to provide comment on the proposed methods being tested. John Flatley agreed to circulate a paper summarising the proposed methods of collecting data for the committee's consideration.

**[Action: John Flatley** to compile a paper outlining the proposed methods of collecting data which might deliver savings in 2012/13 and beyond. **To be complete by 1 May].**

29. Iain Williams referred members to Paper 01-11, *UKSA Assessment of HO Crime Statistics*. The UKSA is currently undertaking a review to ascertain whether official statistics comply with the UKSA Code of Practice (2009). As users of Home Office statistics, the SDSSC has been asked to provide feedback on how they use crime statistics, how well these statistics meet their needs and the effectiveness of their engagement with the producer team in the Home Office.
30. Members agreed to send their comments to the secretariat who would collate them, re-circulate them to members for approval and then submit them to the UKSA.

**[Action Members** to send to Iain Williams comments to feed into the SDSSC's response to the UKSA Assessment of Home Office Crime Statistics. **Action complete].**

31. As there was a short deadline for submission of comments, the chair agreed to contact the UKSA to ask for an extension to ensure that the committee was able to feed in their views.

## **Finalisation of SDDSC Reports:**

32. In March 2010, the Committee's report 'Statistical Lacunae in Press Releases' was published. Following this piece of work, Home Office statisticians worked with Press Office to draft guidance on the presentation of statistics in press releases, taking forward the Committee's recommendations.
33. Home Office Press Office colleagues are content with the guidance and it is now being used by Home Office colleagues.
34. Iain Williams thanked members for their input into the guidance and agreed to circulate the final draft of the guidance to members.

**[Action: Secretariat** to circulate Home Office Press Release guidance to members. **To be complete by 10 February].**

#### **Localisation of Crime Statistics:**

35. Professor Brian Francis provided a summary of the SDSSC's localisation report, updated based on the committee's discussions at the last meeting.
36. Members agreed that the title of the report should be amended to *Presentation of the Localisation of Crime and Related Statistics by Time and Place*.
37. Members agreed that references to arms-length bodies need to be updated to reflect developments in the status of some of these organisations.
38. For brevity, it was agreed that the analysis work undertaken by Lancaster University would be presented via a web link in the section of the report *Learning from others about geographical and periodic analyses*.
39. Professor Brian Francis agreed to update the report based on the Committee's discussions and to circulate the amended report to members

**[Action: Brian Francis** to update the Committee's report on the localisation of crime statistics based on the Committee's discussions and circulate the amended report to members. **To be complete by 15 March].**

#### **AOB:**

40. Professor Brian Francis invited suggestions for future work for the Committee. Professor Sheila Bird suggested exploring the area of secure data storage and linkage, citing the work being conducted by the Academy of Medical Sciences on data anonymisation, creating 'safe havens' which limit access to details held on members of the public. Members agreed to consider potential future areas of work for the committee.

**[Action: Members** to send to the secretariat ideas for potential future areas of work for the SDSSC. **To be complete by 15 April 2011].**

41. Professor Mike Hough agreed to circulate to members details of the Criminal Justice Network's conference in June.

**[Action: Professor Mike Hough** to circulate details of the Criminal Justice Network's conference in June. **To be complete by 1 May].**

42. The Chair thanked members for their contributions and closed the meeting.

#### **Science Secretariat January 2011**