

The likely impact of government expenditure on demographic statistics and population studies

decisions of Council, January 2011

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1. Implementing the agreement at October 2010 Council, BSPS members were asked to complete _____ members responded, including many of the most experienced of users of ONS statistics. Those that gave their name for possible further contact are listed in Appendix 1.

Office for National Statistics work programme

2. The first two questions were explicitly concerned with helping BSPS formulate its response to ONS consultation on its work programme, in the context of the government target to reduce ONS expenditure by 18% in real terms between 2010/11 and 2014/15. BSPS officers also helped ONS consultation at a successful public meeting at the Royal Statistical Society on November 24th. Tiziana Leone co-organising the meeting, for t chaired it.
3. The BSPS response that was submitted to ONS on its consultation was agreed by BSPS officers and is circulated to Council in parallel with this report. It noted, among other concerns of BSPS members, that microdata from the Census and surveys should be maintained, that ONS small area statistics had become fundamental to research and planning in the government and the university sectors, and that the review of the Census should not assume that the known difficulties of survey and administrative sources for monitoring social trends could be overcome.

Reductions in statistics outside ONS

4. The third question Of the BSPS online survey asked for members reductions, or proposals for reductions, in demographic statistics or analysis in the ONS. Concerns about possible reductions were given rather than specific cuts, as it is likely reductions will be mainly from the financial year 2011/12. Co-ordination across the UK was a concern, to maintain or create as much consistency in series, for example of sub-national projections. The major reorganisation of the health service was cited as reason for especial concern for the maintenance of evidence of health information. One local authority respondent expects a 50% reduction in capacity for demographic analysis in that organisation.
5. Reductions already implemented in the current financial year are most likely to involve dropping studies that were still in the process of being commissioned, rather than the curtailment of existing series. Some feedback will be available from Freedom of Information requests to government departments and agencies, to be released in February
BSPS respondents (<http://en.wordpress.com/tag/reduced-statistics/>)

Can official statistics be provided outside government?

6. The fourth and final question asked ment
output which you feel would be appropriately and effectively provided by the
Six respondents gave no opinion.

7. Six respondents suggested topics that could be provided outside the UK
government, ranging from crime to business statistics, and analytical or
visualisation services. One pointed to some statistics already produced outside the
UK government which they presumably regard of sufficient quality, including