Communicating migration statistics in a changing context

Challenges and strategies in the UK

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Background

• We are transforming the way we produce UK migration statistics, making ever greater use of administrative data.

• We aim to meet growing user needs, in a rapidly changing policy context.
Our latest progress

- We have been embedding more administrative data in our regular migration flow statistics

- In August, we made further progress and applied a preliminary adjustment using new sources

- We have reclassified to ‘Experimental Statistics’ to signal a period of development and innovation

Why communication matters
Effective communication is vital to achieving our ambition

- **Understanding what users need**
  - As we make changes, we need to bring users along with us on the journey
  - With migration policy likely to change in parallel, we need to be responsive to new needs for evidence

- **Telling a story through our statistics**
  - In a changing society and policy context, our statistics should support decision-making and inform debate
  - We need to present analysis in a meaningful and insightful way

How are we doing this?

**Our strategy is to:**

- Regularly publish research and methods as we develop them
- Engage with our users and stakeholders, seeking regular feedback
- Use our research findings, the best available data and methods, and the feedback from users to make decisions about which improvements to make each year
- Implement changes to our statistics when and where appropriate, clearly communicating these changes to users in advance of making them
Engaging users and gathering feedback

Research engagement report

• Collecting feedback to support our transformation
  • What migration statistics are used for, what they would like to see, types of outputs that are valuable

• Reaching out to different groups
  • Stakeholder mapping
  • Dedicated meetings, hosted webinars, roadshows and round table events
  • Social media, blogs

• You said, we did…
  • Published an official response so there’s a feedback loop
Collaboration with stakeholders

- Government Statistical Service Migration Steering Group
  - Bringing together government departments e.g. Home Office, DWP

- Migration Expert Group
  - Feeding in academic and research expertise on migration

- Migration Statistics User Forum
  - Feedback and sharing with local government, think tanks, researchers

- UK Population Theme Advisory Group
  - Feeding in academic and research expertise on population and demography

Presentation and visualisation
Displaying uncertainty

Long-term international migration, UK, year ending December 2008 to year ending December 2018

Source: Office for National Statistics - Long-Term International Migration

Interactive tools

Source: Office for National Statistics - Birth registrations
Future plans and challenges

Communicating change

- As we progress with our transformation, a main challenge is continuing to communicate effectively so that users understand the changes we make (and why)
- Migration statistics continue to be high profile and there is a focus in the media and public domain
- Users have asked what changes mean for the quality of our statistics and the impact on the story they tell
Our next steps and priorities

• Communicating “one version of the truth” in the context of iteratively refining our methods
• Displaying uncertainty in a multi-source world and ensuring users can interpret the trends
• Telling the story of how we are making more and better use of administrative data, and what this means
• Continuing to strengthen engagement with stakeholders and key partners e.g. Office for Statistics Regulation

Questions and Discussion