

# Statistical News

Spring 1995

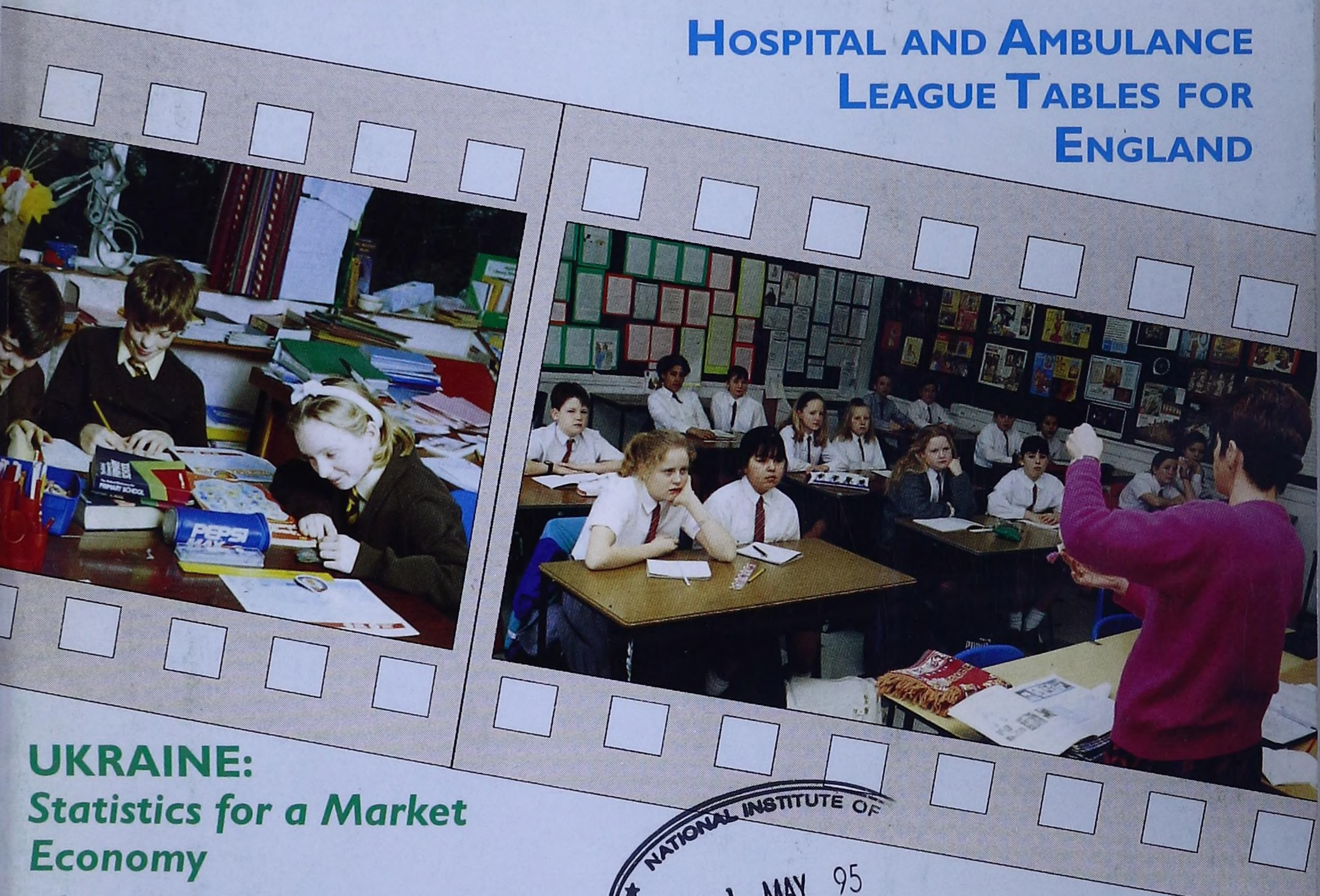
Issue 107

Central Statistical Office

**THE DEVELOPMENT  
OF SOCIAL FOCUS  
ON CHILDREN**

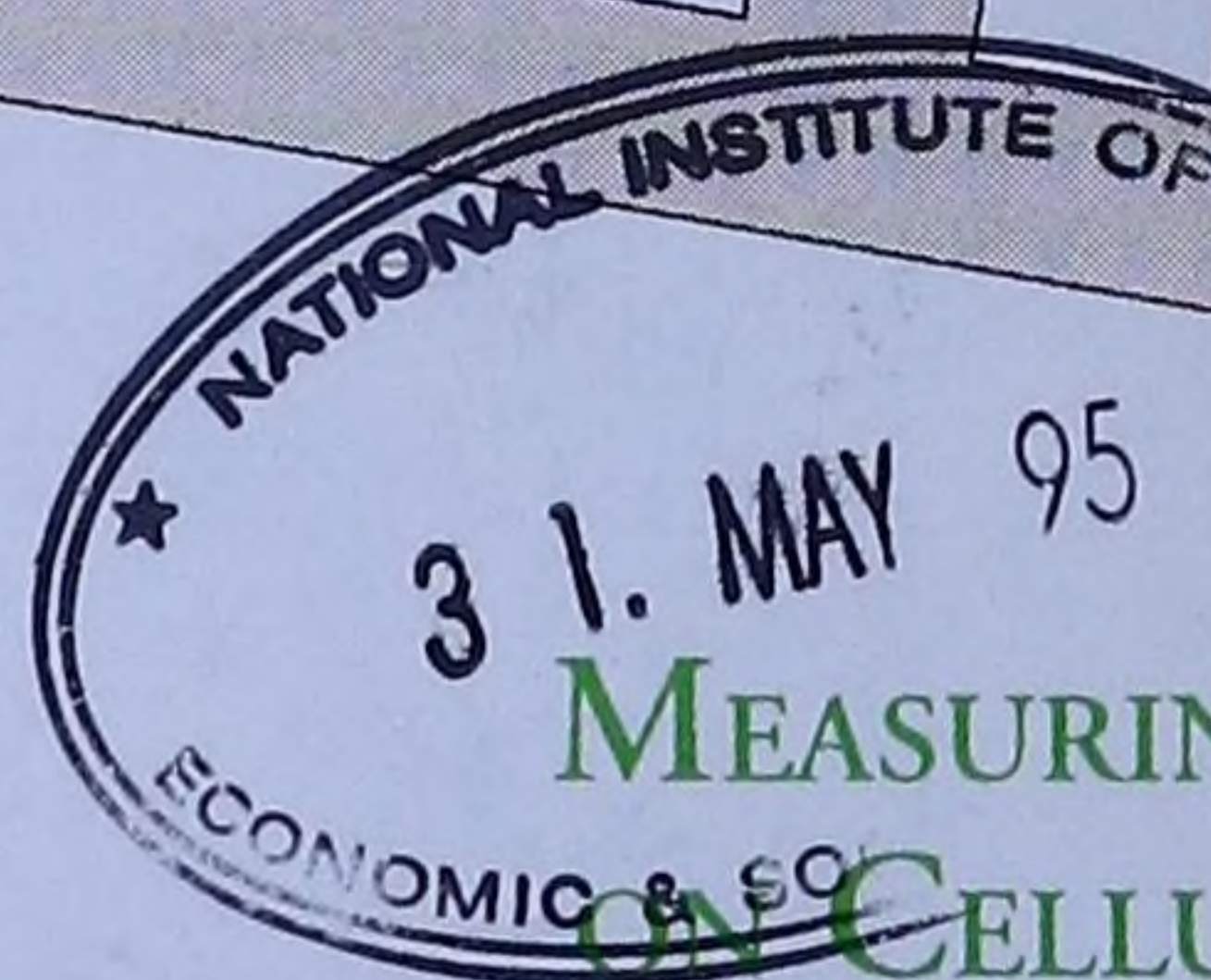
**Truths, Home Truths and Crime Statistics**

**HOSPITAL AND AMBULANCE  
LEAGUE TABLES FOR  
ENGLAND**



**UKRAINE:  
Statistics for a Market  
Economy**

**INTRASTAT: ELECTRONIC  
DATA INTERCHANGE (EDI)**



**MEASURING QUALITY OF SERVICE  
ON CELLULAR RADIO NETWORKS**





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ISSN 0017-3630

It is hoped that *Statistical News* will be of service and interest not only to professional statisticians but to everybody who uses statistics. I should therefore be glad to receive comments from readers on the adequacy of its scope, coverage or treatment of topics and their suggestions for improvement.

Enquiries about individual items in this issue should be made to the appropriate sources where indicated; otherwise they should be addressed to Sallie Taylor, Editor, *Statistical News*, Central Statistical Office, Room D.134, Government Buildings, Cardiff Road, Newport, Gwent NP9 1XG. Telephone: 01633 812915 or Fax: 01633 812693

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# Statistical News

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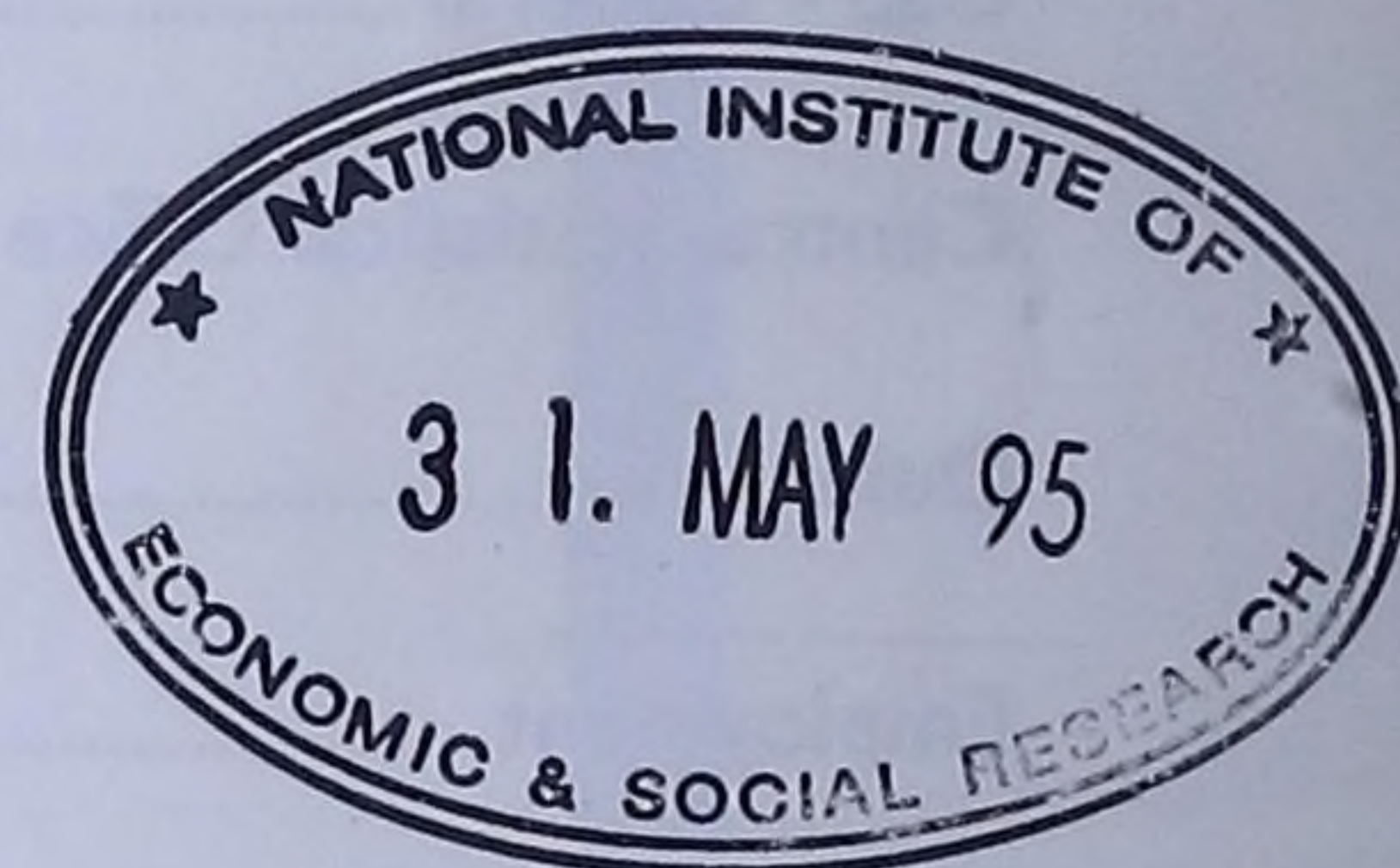
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**Developments in British  
Official Statistics**

**No. 107  
Spring 1995**

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# Readership Survey



## Statistical News

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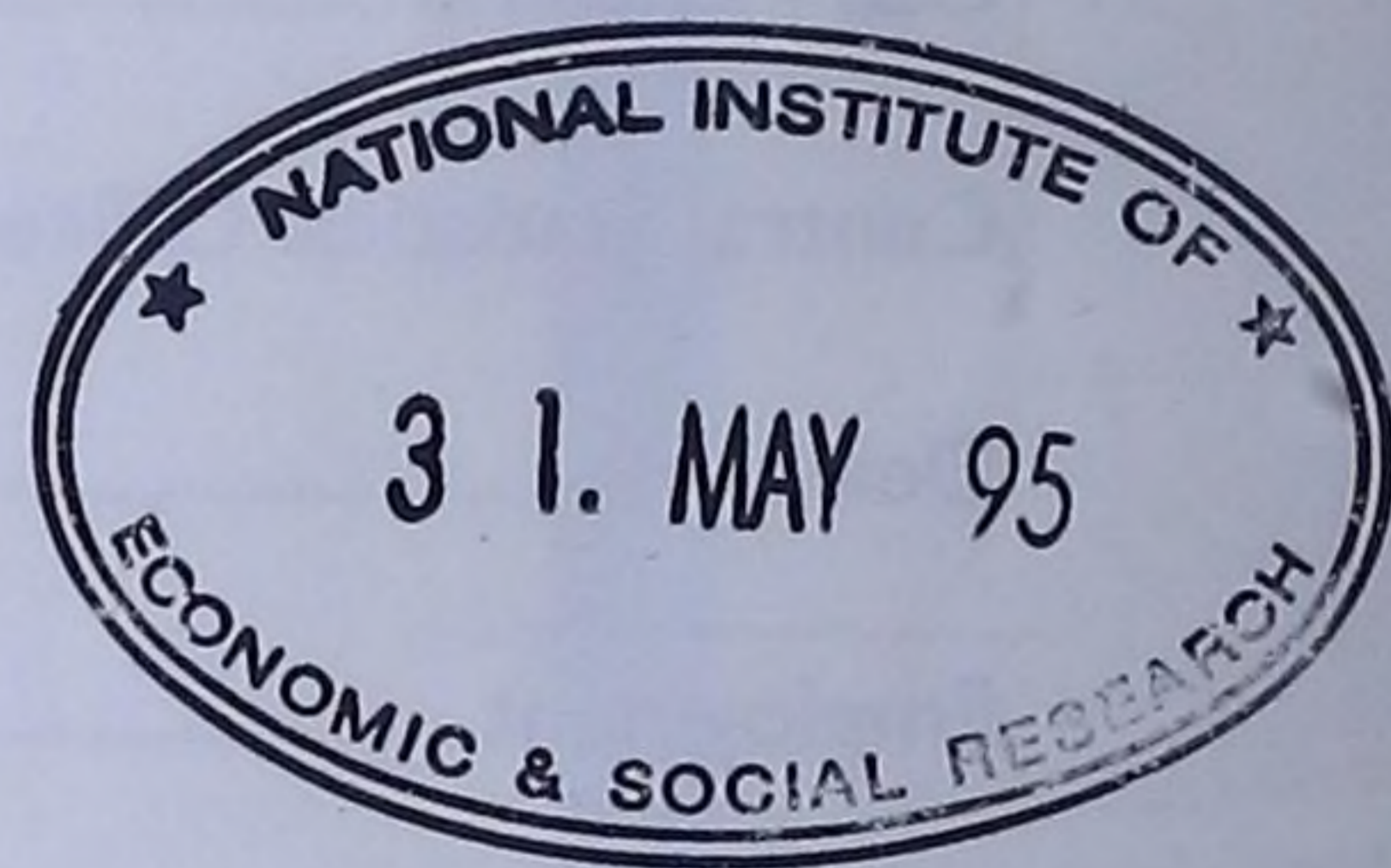


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- Agriculture & Fisheries
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Government Statistical Service structure & policies

Other (*please state* .....  
.....

**CONTENT**

**6. Which section do you find the most useful?**

- Feature articles
- News from around the GSS and beyond
- Surveys and Publications supplement

***Feature articles***

**7. Are you happy with the range of subjects covered by the articles?**

- Would like wider range
- Range about right
- Would like narrower range

**8. Do you find the articles interesting and readable?**

- Not at all     Very interesting 1 2 3 4 interesting  
Comments.....  
.....

**9. Are there any topics you would like to see featured in an article?**

.....  
.....  
.....

***News from around the GSS and beyond***

**10. How interesting do you find this section?**

- Not at all     Very interesting 1 2 3 4 interesting

**11. What other information would be useful in this section?**

.....  
.....  
.....

***Surveys and Publications supplement***

**12. How important is the information in the supplement to you?**

- Not important     Very important 1 2 3 4 important





**Feature articles**

7. Are you happy with the range of subjects covered by the articles?

- Would like wider range
- Range about right
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Comments.....

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10. How interesting do you find this section?

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11. What other information would be useful in this section?

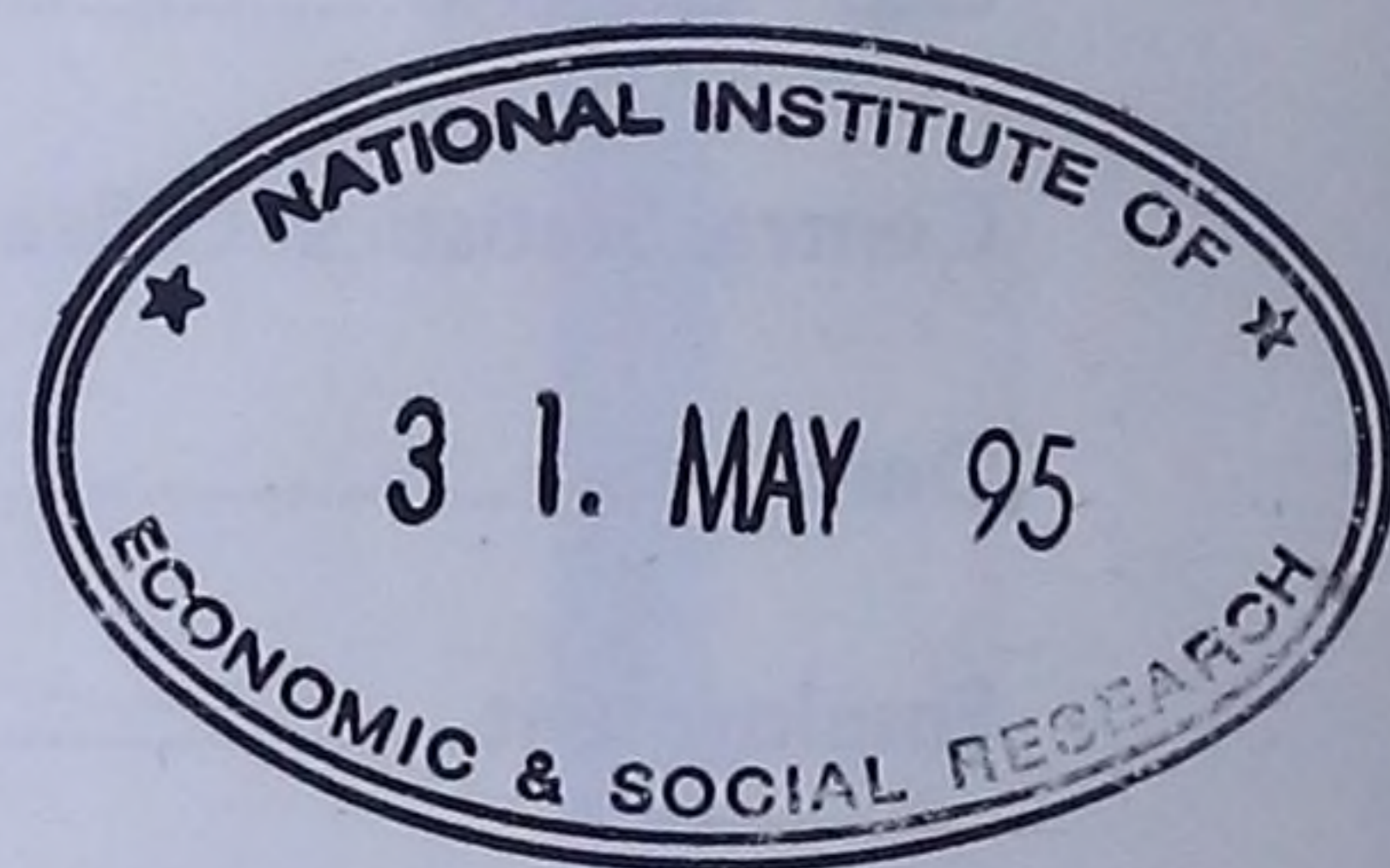
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**Surveys and Publications supplement**

12. How important is the information in the supplement to you?

- Not     Very important 1 2 3 4 important

*Statistical News Readership Survey*





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## From the Editor

As you can see, we have introduced new cover designs for the front of *Statistical News* and for the supplement. I'm sure that you will agree that it is a colourful improvement on our previous editions. I hope that you will also like the enhancements that have been made in the News from around the GSS and beyond section. Hopefully, as time progresses, we can incorporate more photographs and illustrations giving each issue much more of a visual impact.

We have also included in this edition a readership survey which we would like you to complete and return as soon as possible. The results will be used to help us determine what improvements need to be implemented for future editions. We welcome any suggestions you have on what subjects you would like us to include, or how we could improve on the design. Please return your contributions in the reply envelope provided by 12 May 1995.

*If you have other submissions suitable for the letters page, Please free to write to me at the address below.*

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*I look forward to hearing from you.*



# The development of Social Focus on Children



## “ Young devils and little angels - the facts ”

“Marketing folk from companies round the country will rush out this morning to spend £25 buying Social Focus on Children....for any up and coming sales strategist or advertising agent it is a godsend” -

*Pennington column, The Times, 24 August 1994.*

“A survey restoring some perspective, highlighting the fact that - for all our social troubles - this is the most privileged and fortunate generation in our history, is greatly to be welcomed”

*The Daily Telegraph leader, 25 August 1994.*

“Meet the tall, healthy, square-eyed, green, wealthy monsters!”

*Herald Express (Torquay local paper) 29 August 1994.*

These are just three quotes from the extensive national and local press coverage that Social Focus on Children, the first in a new series of publications on different social groups, received on its release.

In the end all the work put in on Social Focus was worth it - just! I have never worked so hard in all my life - and yet still enjoyed it. The low point was being at the office at 8.00pm one Saturday evening, finalising the draft. The high point - publication day and being interviewed more than 20 times on live radio.

This is a personal account of my experience of the development of the first edition of Social Focus, during my time at the Central Statistical Office. It was, of course, very much a team effort, and was only made possible with everyone's hard work.

This project was different from any I had worked on before, it really was impossible to not get enthusiastic about it. The more people I spoke to about it, the more ideas I got. Everyone seemed to know of another publication to look at or someone else to speak to. It could have been never-ending, and probably would have been if it had not been for the watchful eyes of the editorial team.

## How did we go about it ?

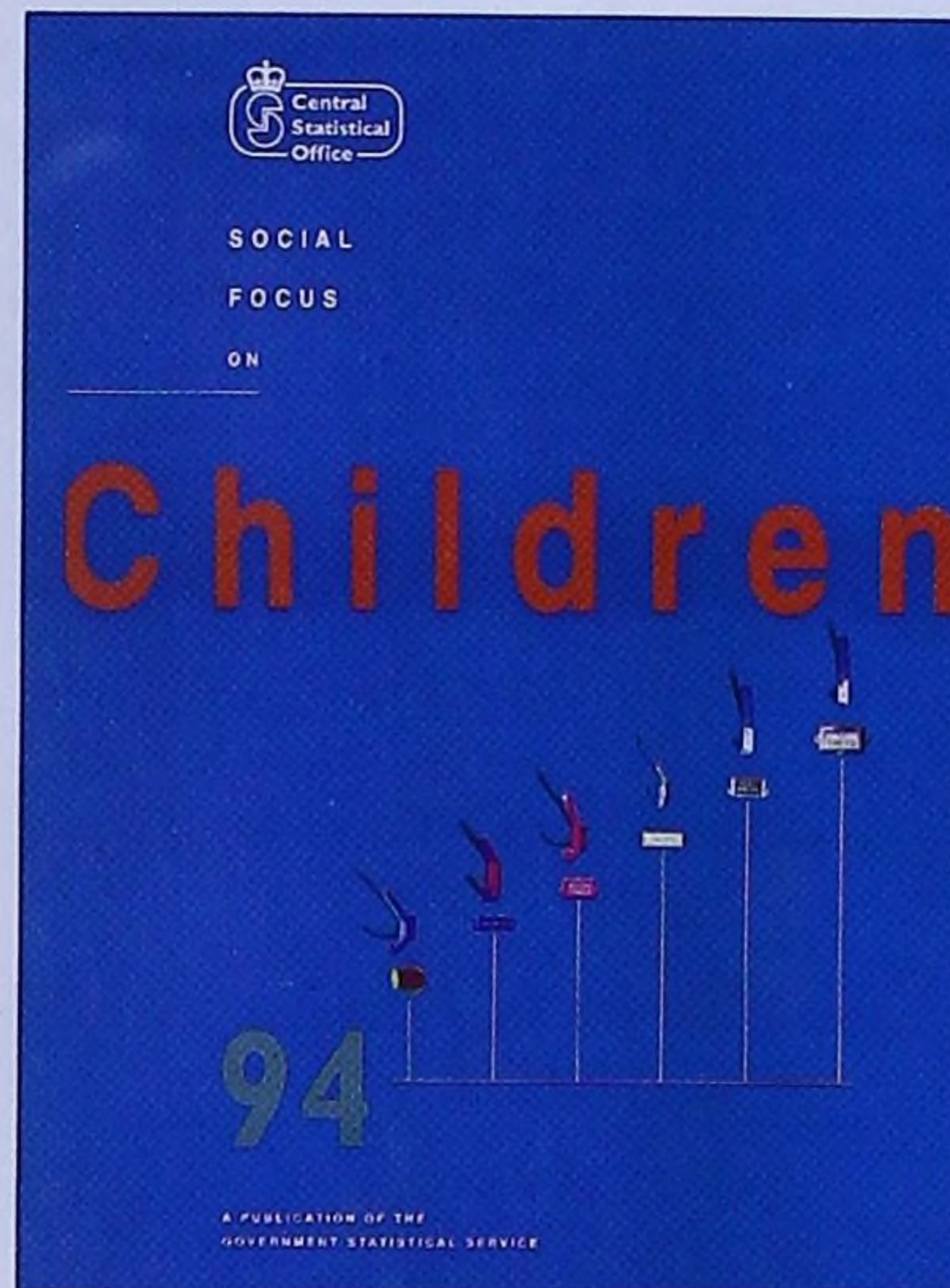
The idea for a new series of publications, looking at different social groups in greater detail than is possible in Social Trends, had been around for several years. But it

was not until July 1993 that the work started, with a paper to the Government Statistical Service Committee on Social Statistics. This committee is chaired by Bill McLennan and includes directors of statistics from the 'social' departments. The project was discussed and given the backing of the Committee, and I was given useful contact points in government departments together with some initial ideas for what could be included.

As a government statistician the obvious starting point is to talk to colleagues within government. This sounds deceptively easy, especially as by this time I already had contacts in most departments. However arranging meetings took time as diaries fill

up so quickly. But eventually I ended up visiting most major government departments, over a period of three months, accompanied by various members of the Social Focus team.

Still, it was well worth taking the time to visit the experts. The meetings served as a great opportunity to bounce ideas off people as well as to find out what information they had. I was keen to find out what they thought should be in the book and particularly what they considered to be topical. It also helped me obtain further contacts. It was very important for me to talk to these people - I am certainly not an expert on statistics on children and there are many pitfalls for the unwary. I needed to be aware of as many of them as possible before putting pen to paper.

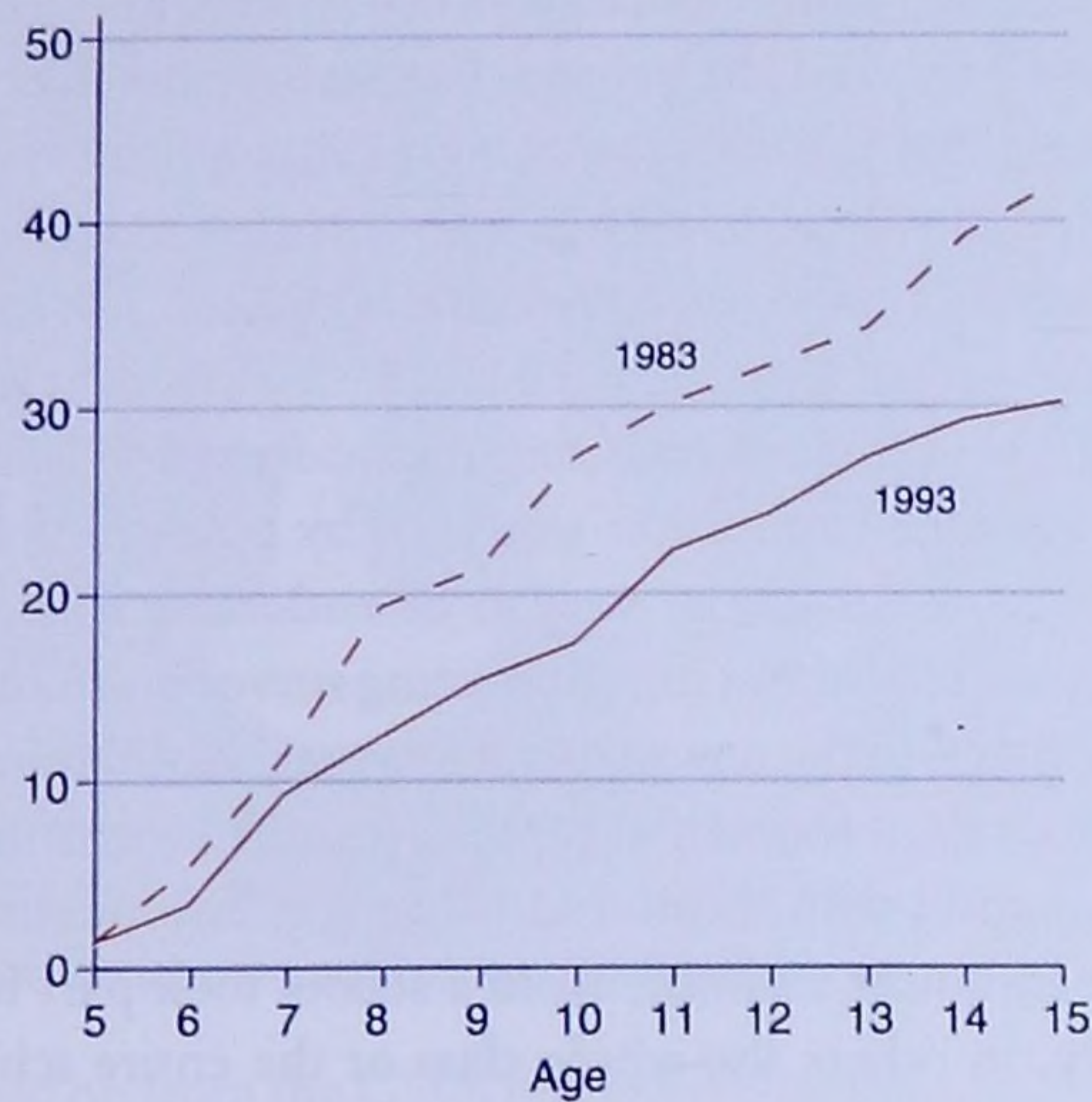




**Proportion of children with some decayed permanent teeth: by age, 1983 and 1993**

United Kingdom

Percentages



Source: Office of Population Censuses and Surveys

I was keen to talk to experts other than statisticians such as researchers, economists and nutritionists. This gave a useful and different perspective, as well as identifying different sources of data.

Next we decided what to actually include in the book. In fact the challenge was to keep it down to reasonable length - we aimed for around 50 pages. At this stage it was helpful to get the views of people who were not as closely involved as myself. This helped to achieve a more balanced publication as they were able to point out topics that were missing and also highlight areas that could be reduced.

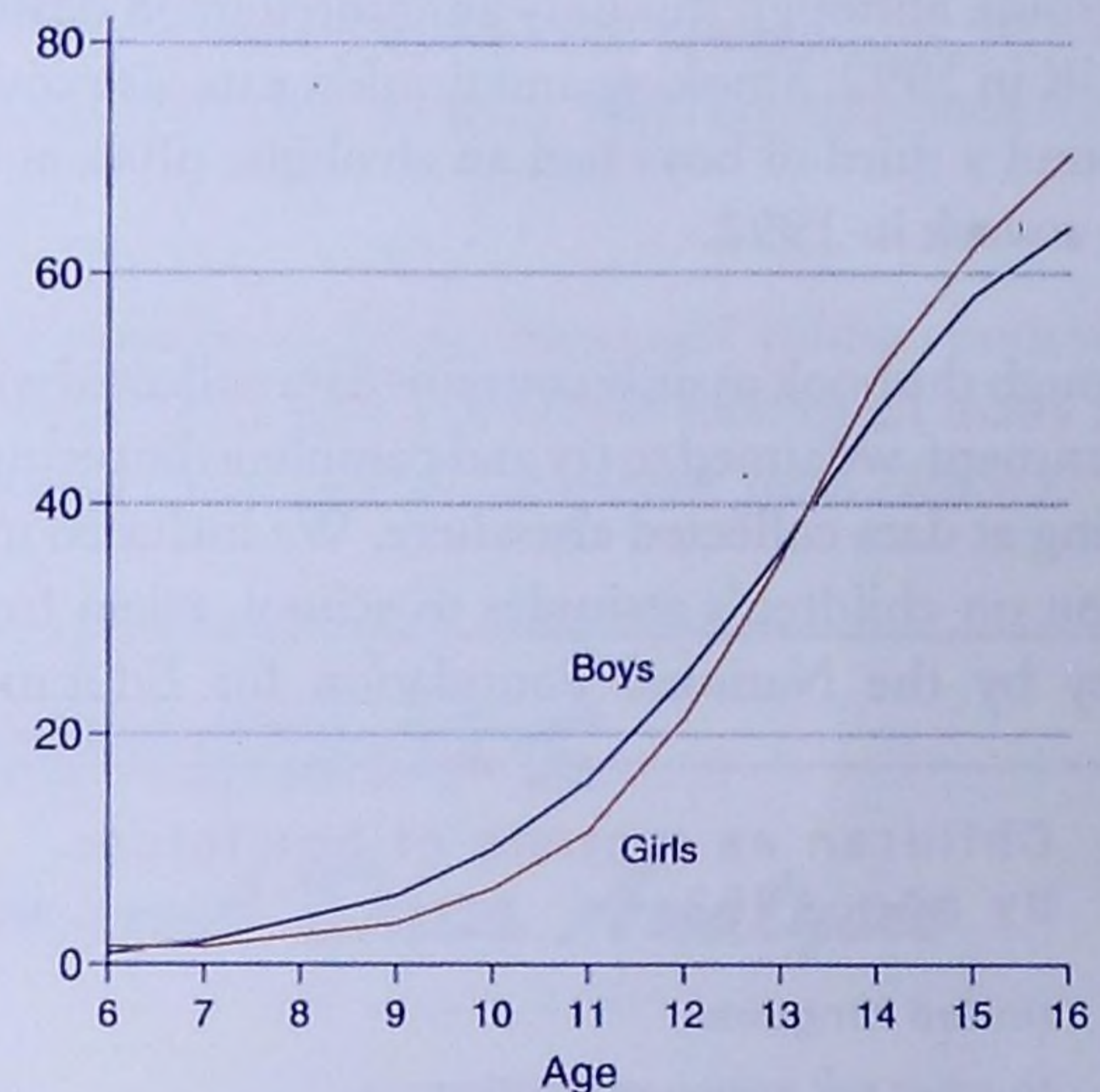
We had by this time decided to define a child as someone aged under 16, but this can cause problems. Some departments collect data on dependent children which also includes full time students under 19; others define children as those under 18. Also we aimed to get data on a United Kingdom basis wherever possible - again this can cause major headaches obtaining statistics on a comparable basis. In some areas such as basic demographic statistics it is relatively easy, but for health statistics it is much harder, and for most crime statistics it is impossible due to the different legal system in Scotland. Thankfully, with the close co-operation of departments, we were able to obtain data on a consistent basis in the majority of cases.

From start to finish the project took a year, with me working on it virtually full time for the last six months. Writing the text, although not the most time consuming part of the process, was by far the hardest part. I had consistently underestimated how long most stages of the publication were going to take but this really surprised me (tip for anyone planning a new publication - estimate the length of time needed and double it!). I was used to writing chapters for Social Trends, but I never realised how hard it is to start with a blank sheet of paper. I also made a conscious effort to write more text around the items than for Social Trends. It seems that this was the

**Cumulative proportion of pupils who will have tried smoking: by age and gender, 1992**

England

Percentages



Source: Office of Population Censuses and Surveys

right idea as initial findings from the readership survey were that many readers actually wanted more text.

**Who is it for ?**

The book is aimed at a wide audience including researchers, students, market researchers, the informed layperson and those interested in social policy. It is intended to inform debate, especially among those with a particular interest in children's issues. It should be a useful first point of call, and is the first time that all the main facts and figures about children have been brought together in one government report.



## What is in it ?

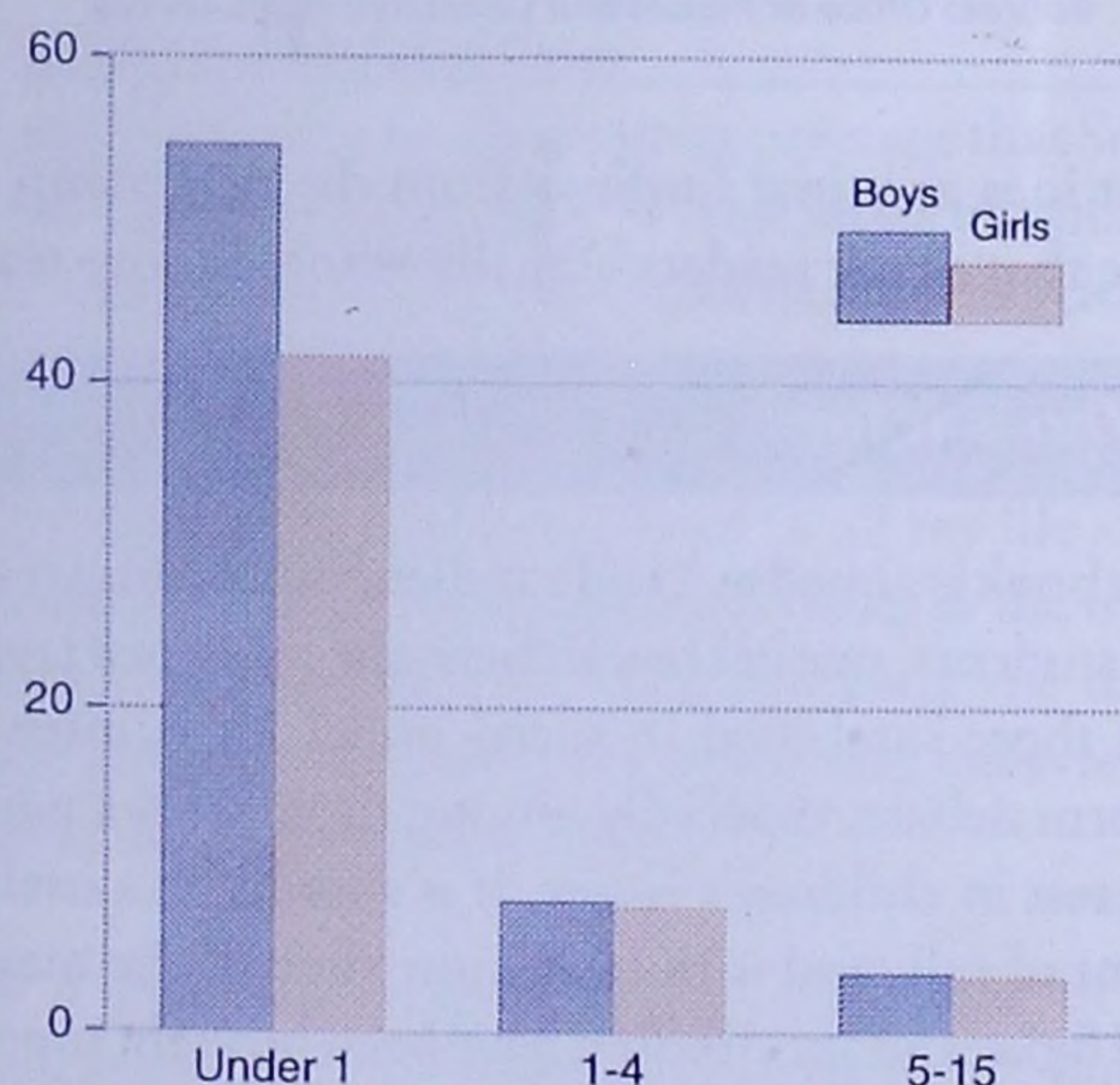
Everything you ever wanted to know about what it is like to be a child in the UK today! The typical 90s child is computer literate, has strong views on environmental issues, spends hours watching TV, travels by car... and doesn't go to church. There are sections on health, education, crime, the home environment and lifestyle and much more besides. I was not surprised that there are 12 million children in the UK or that a third of children are born outside marriage. But I didn't know that 1 in 12 children live in stepfamilies. It was pleasing to find out that children's dental health has improved dramatically in the last decade: in 1993 only five in ten 15 year olds had fillings compared with more than eight in ten in 1983. It was more disturbing to discover that children under one were more at risk of homicide than any other age group, although this only amounted to 38 deaths in the UK in 1992. Smoking and drinking are also covered - around a third of boys had an alcoholic drink at least once a week in 1992.

Although the book mainly contains data collected within government, we aimed to try and complete the picture by looking at data collected elsewhere. We included information on children's attitudes to school, taken from a survey by the National Foundation for Educational

### Children as victims of homicide: by age, 1992

United Kingdom

Number per million population



Source: Home Office; The Scottish Office Home and Health Department; Royal Ulster Constabulary

Research. This showed that children's perceptions of their own ability are high - only 4 per cent of children thought they were below average at school work! We also found out, courtesy of The National Study of Health and Growth, that children of a given age are getting taller - an average 8 year old girl is now 1.6 cm taller than they were 20 years ago. Other interesting findings from outside government were that Viz is the most read magazine by boys aged 11 to 14, even though it is marked 'not for sale to children' and that 7 in 10 children of this age group had a TV in their room. Obviously care had to be taken in using data from other sources - by publishing them ourselves, we could be seen to be endorsing them. For example I read about one interesting survey on children's social habits in the newspaper. However on obtaining the original report found that the data included was from any school child who wanted to fill in a questionnaire - in some instances a sample from a school took part in the survey, in others the whole class or the entire school - there was no attempt to obtain a statistically valid sample. Obviously we could not use these results in the book.

## Press and publicity

The press coverage was encouraging with all the daily papers having stories on it, including a couple of leaders. This fully justified the efforts put in by the Social Focus team and the CSO Press Office. It is made as easy as possible for the papers to pick up on the main stories by providing a News Release with the main points of interest from the book.

Having already worked on Social Trends I was well aware that the book would be described as a survey, and many papers described as the first government survey of what it is like to be child in the UK today. One even said '...according to a survey of 12 million under 16 year olds'. We only used statistically valid information but even I did not claim that we had interviewed every child in the UK!

The radio interviews were a new and exciting experience for me. The initial ones were very nerve wracking, but they became much easier after the first couple with the same sorts of questions coming up. One radio interviewer, actually envisaged me going out and asking children all these questions myself but I did not think that I could take the credit for all of it!





As it was during the school holidays, many radio stations went out to play centres to ask the kids themselves how much pocket money they got, what their favourite TV programmes were etc. One station did this live on air and then asked me for my reactions - fortunately for me they did not come out with too outlandish answers!

### What next ?

The next edition? There was a readership survey with the first edition and the comments were generally favourable: some suggestions for improvements were that there should be more detailed analysis, more trends over time, and additional regional data. Suggested topics for future editions included the elderly, women, ethnic minorities and young adults. I have now

moved on from the CSO, but I hear that the next edition will be Social Focus on Women. I will certainly look forward to seeing how the series progresses.

Finally I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the contributors to the Social Focus on Children both within and outside government, and especially to colleagues in Department of Health and OPCS who spent many hours providing data and pouring over drafts. *Social Focus on Children. Price £25.00 - available from HMSO*

## **SUMMER WORKSHOPS** *in Social Research Methods and Data Analysis*

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**UNIT ROOTS & STATIONARITY IN TIME SERIES DATA 24-28 JULY, 1995**

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Linear Structural Equations  
Analysis of Textual Data



# Truths, Home Truths and Crime Statistics



by David Povey, Home Office

## Introduction

On 27 September 1994, the Home Office published statistics that showed the largest fall for 40 years in the number of crimes recorded by the police in England and

Wales. Instead of generating an entirely favourable reaction in the media, these figures attracted much critical comment, with allegations of massaging, misrepresentation, and inconsistency.

This article aims to place the recorded crime statistics in perspective, and to address some of the issues raised in the media reports.

## How crime is measured

Nobody really knows the true extent of crime in this country. This is a fundamental point that should not be overlooked. In obtaining information that provides the best approximation of all crimes committed, the Home Office looks to two main sources: the police who record them, and the general public who may be the victims of them.

The figures from the police are based on their administrative records that cover all the offences they deal with. The measure is deficient however, in that it does not include crimes committed that have not been made known to them.

The figures from the general public are collected by means of a household victimisation survey: the British Crime Survey. This provides a sample count of crimes committed (whether recorded by the police or not), albeit only those against individuals and their property.

The extent to which each series covers the main types of offences can be compared in the table below.

## Crimes recorded by the Police (notifiable offences)

The statistics collected here are by-products of the administrative procedure of making out a crime record for those



offences that the police investigate. This procedure is generally carried out at police stations (such as Belgravia in the Metropolitan Police District, pictured above) Not all offence categories are included in the statistics of notifiable offences (as the recorded crime figures are officially entitled), but the coverage is consistent across all forces, having been determined by the Home Office. Broadly, it comprises all of the more serious offences for which suspects can be tried in the Crown Court (although most of these are actually tried in the Magistrates' Courts). This comprises all violence against the person from assault occasioning actual bodily harm to murder; sexual offences; robbery (from mugging to armed robbery); burglary; theft; fraud and forgery; criminal damage; public order offences; more serious drug offences; and some other miscellaneous ones.

Examples of offences excluded are motoring offences (except if death is caused), possession of drugs, drunkenness and prostitution. In addition to the substantive offences, attempts or threats to commit them are included too. Thus, failed attempts at burglaries for example are contained within the burglary total, even though some might regard a failed attempt as representing success in preventing a crime rather than a crime in itself.

The Home Office issues returns that all forces must complete on aspects of crimes recorded and crimes detected. These data form the basis for the national recorded crime statistics, which are published in a statistical bulletin twice a year. The Home Office seeks to maintain the quality of the figures by raising validation queries with the forces. It also



## COVERAGE OF OFFENCES BY THE RECORDED CRIME STATISTICS AND THE BRITISH CRIME SURVEY

Type of offence	Offences recorded by the police		Offences <u>NOT</u> recorded by the police	
	Are they included in ... NOF	BCS	Are they included in ... NOF	BCS
Homicide	✓	✗	✗	✗
Wounding	✓	✓	✗	✓
Common Assault	✗	✓	✗	✓
Sexual Offences	✓	✓	✗	✓
Mugging, Theft from the Person	✓	✓	✗	✓
Other Robbery	✓	✗	✗	✗
Domestic Burglary	✓	✓	✗	✓
Other Burglary	✓	✗	✗	✗
Car/Motorcycle Theft	✓	✓	✗	✓
Commercial Vehicle Theft	✓	✗	✗	✗
Bicycle Theft	✓	✓	✗	✓
Theft from Shops & Commercial Property	✓	✗	✗	✗
Fraud & Forgery	✓	✗	✗	✗
Criminal Damage: Cars/Motorcycles	✓	✓	✗	✓
Domestic Property	✓	✓	✗	✓
Commercial Property	✓	✗	✗	✗
Other Household Theft	✗	✓	✗	✓
Other Personal Theft	✗	✓	✗	✓
Supply & Trafficking of Drugs	✓	✗	✗	✗
Possession of Drugs	✗	✗	✗	✗
Motoring Offences (not resulting in death)	✗	✗	✗	✗
Vagrancy, Poaching, Gaming, Liquor laws	✗	✗	✗	✗
Keeping a brothel, 'pimping', etc.	✓	✗	✗	✗
Prostitution, obscene publications	✗	✗	✗	✗
Labour, tenancy, public health, safety etc.	✗	✗	✗	✗
Military law	✗	✗	✗	✗
Local by-laws, regulations etc.	✗	✗	✗	✗

**Key:**

**NOF** = Notifiable Offences Statistics (full count)      **BCS** = British Crime Survey (sample count)  
 ✓ = included in coverage      ✗ = not included

**Note:** The table does not contain a complete list of offences, although it does include the main groups. The coverage symbols are meant to provide a general picture only.



adjusts offence categories where necessary to reflect legislative changes.

Although guided by the Home Office on the recording of crime, the actual decisions are taken by the forces themselves. For example, the selection of offence is generally based on a consideration, at the time of recording, of the most likely offence with which a suspect will be charged. Some might argue that the police have a vested interest in regulating crime levels, possibly to boost detection rates. However, there are several restraining factors that make this unlikely in practice. First, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) regularly examines forces' recording practices and is likely to spot these practices if adopted on more than isolated occasions. Secondly, forces are unlikely to be able to implement such practices widely at the local level without issuing instructions, which would be bound to 'leak'. Finally, the Home Office has a police statistics liaison officer who regularly visits statistics officers in the forces to discuss current issues and obtain information on current procedures.

Despite the Home Office's detailed instructions, and the wording of the law, there are still some areas of offending, for which the classification and recording are open to interpretation. One example concerns attempted vehicle theft, which might be classified as either attempted theft or criminal damage, both of which are recorded; or vehicle interference which is not. The law is not conclusive here, and the Home Office is currently working on agreeing common definitions with the forces for this and other problem areas.

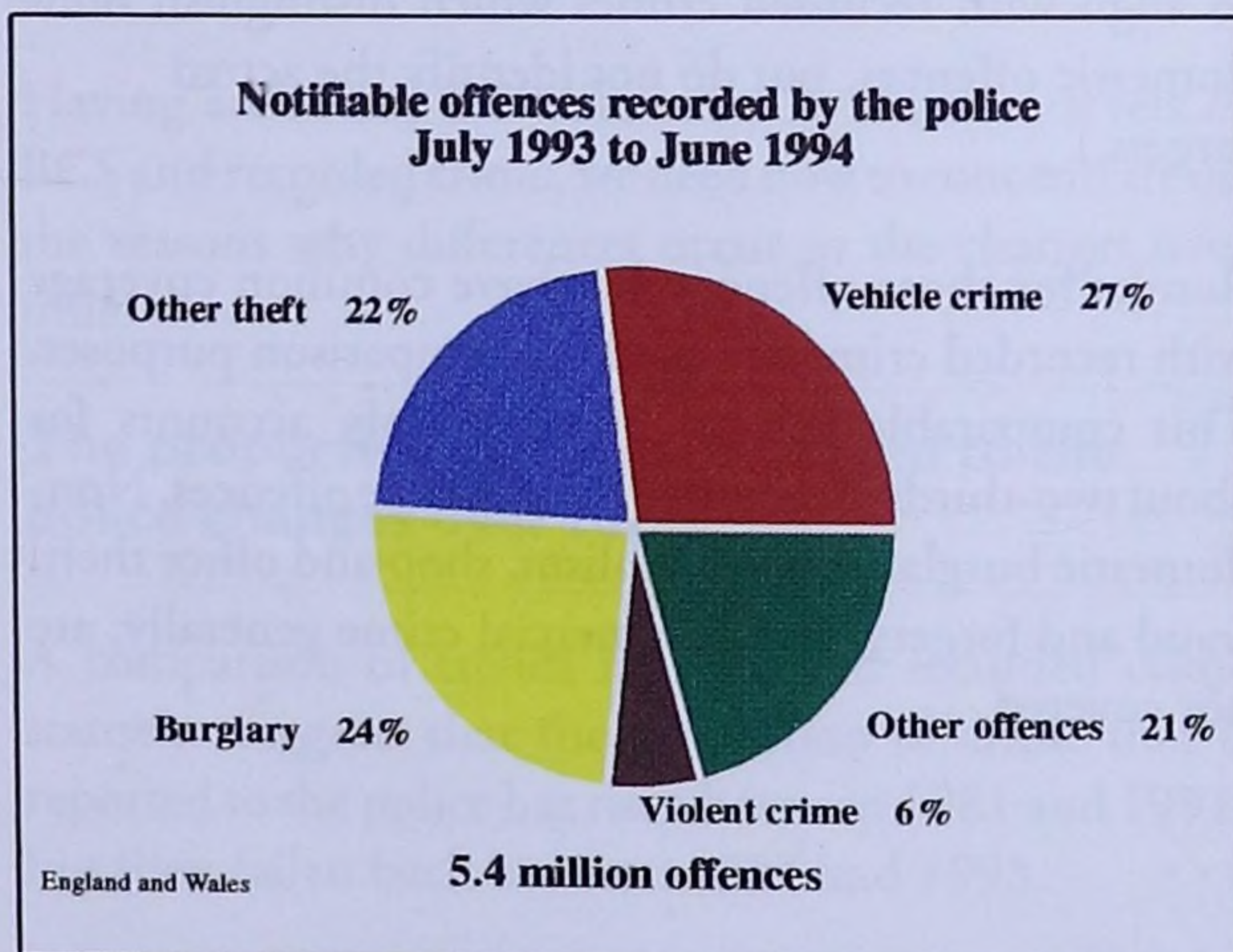


### British Crime Survey

This survey has been conducted five times since 1982 by the Research and Planning Unit of the Home Office. It is a victim survey, drawing on a representative sample of the population who are interviewed about their experiences of crime over the previous year (as pictured above).

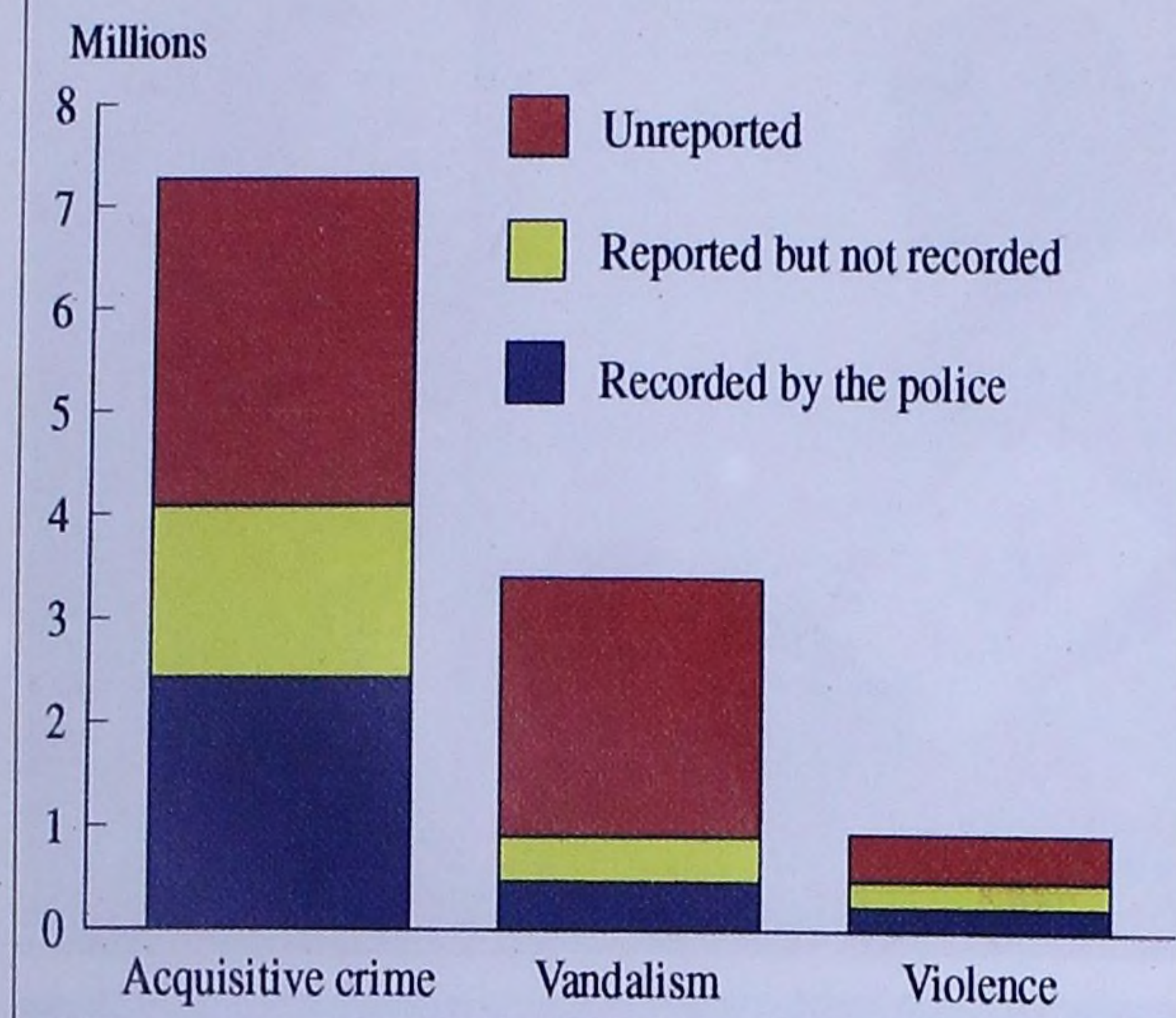
For each crime to which members of the sample have been victim, further details of circumstances, location, offender profile, victim profile and subsequent action are obtained. From this information, estimates of the overall extent of crimes committed by offence category, and changes since previous rounds of the survey, are made. The survey also provides a valuable insight into the effect of crime on victims, and builds up a detailed picture of the nature of offending. In each round, supplementary questions are directed to some or all of the sample: for example, the 1992 survey contained questions specifically directed at teenagers (a new sample), while the 1994 survey had questions on witness and victim intimidation. In this way, the survey can be adapted to suit current policy or research needs.

The BCS has become biennial. When a survey is conducted, interviews are carried out at the beginning of the year and the first results are published in the autumn, giving figures for the previous year. The latest recorded





## Recorded and unrecorded crime, 1993



crime figures for the year to June are published concurrently. The most recent combined publication date was 27 September 1994, with the first BCS results for 1993 (1) and the recorded crime figures for the 12 months to June 1994 (2).

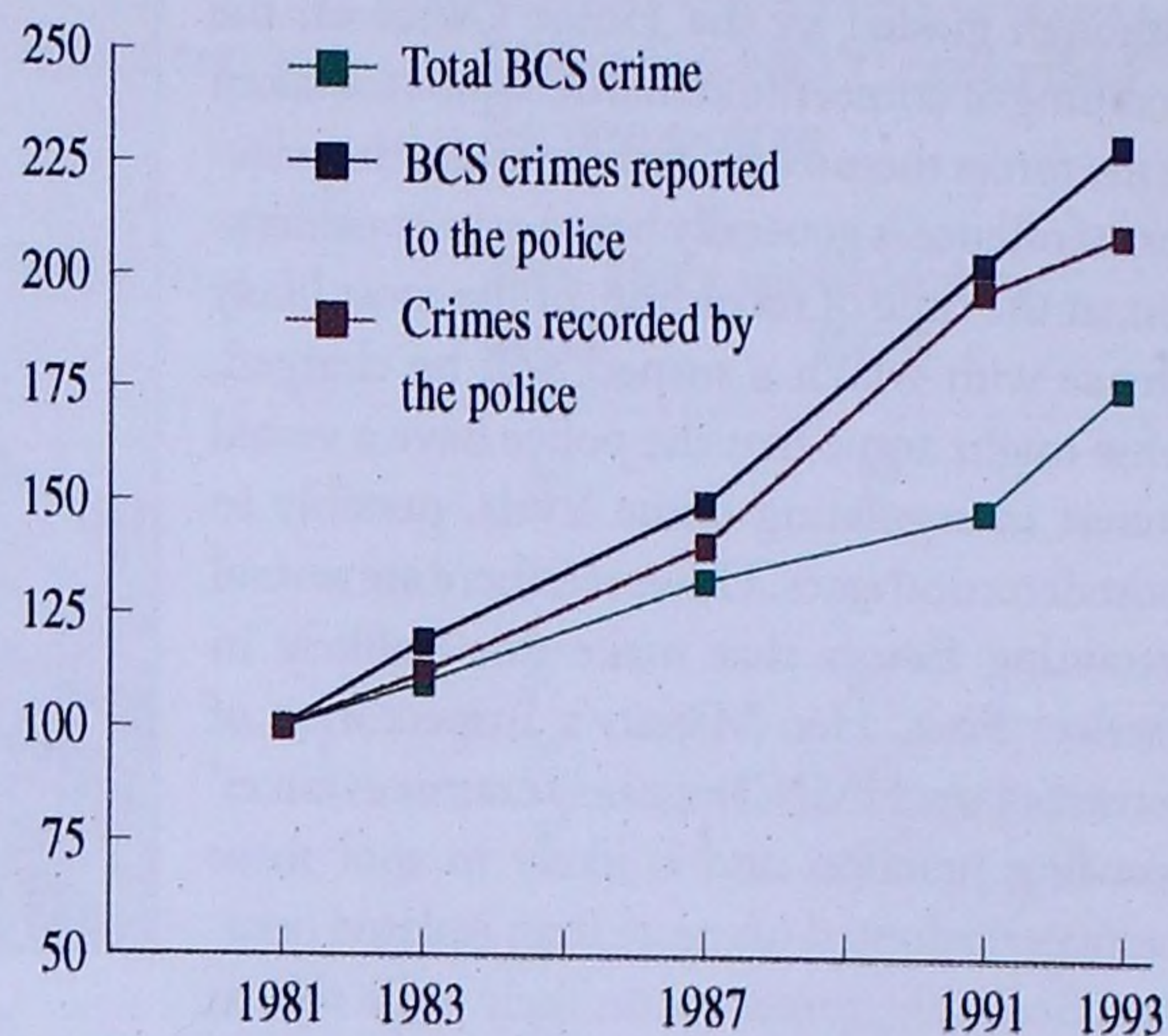
Although the two sets of figures are published separately, both publications contain comparisons of one with the other. The general Home Office policy is that any statistical portrait of crime should incorporate both recorded crime and BCS results.

Having gained a reputation for the integrity of its results, the British Crime Survey is now well respected as a source of crime statistics. Nevertheless, it does have some drawbacks, listed below, which preclude its exclusive use as a measure of crime.

### ● Survey error

First and foremost, it is a sample survey, with the stratified sampling frame yielding response from a nationally representative sample of some 14,500 people in its 1994 round, and 10,000 in previous rounds. Whilst quality issues such as sample selection, non-response, accuracy of the respondents' recollections and perceptions of offences, and wording and delivery of the questions, have been carefully addressed, the results are inevitably subject to survey error. The sample size is also too small to allow police force area analysis, and the cost prevents it being carried out every year.

## Indexed trends in crime 1981 - 1993 comparable sub-set (1981 figures = 100)



### ● Coverage

It only covers offences against individuals and their property, which comprises burglary, vehicle theft, bicycle theft, theft from the person, vehicle and household vandalism, wounding and robbery, all of which are also covered by the recorded crime figures; plus common assault and some other household and personal offences.

Excluded from the coverage are all types of commercial crime. (The Home Office has recently conducted for the first time a victim survey of retailers and manufacturers. This is much smaller in scale than the BCS but will be useful in giving an idea of how risks of crime against business compare with those against householders. The figures from the business survey will however be difficult to align with recorded crimes which distinguish non-domestic offences, but do not identify the actual targets.)

Results for those offences that have common coverage with recorded crime are used for comparison purposes. This comparable sub-set however only accounts for about two-thirds of recorded or notifiable offences. Non-domestic burglary and vandalism, shop and office theft, fraud and forgery, and commercial crime generally, are not covered.



## Why the two sources show differing results

In my descriptions of the police recorded crime figures and the British Crime Survey, I have mentioned ways that inaccuracies can possibly occur. These can of course provide a possible reason why results from the two sources are different. However, the controls that are applied aim to minimise them, to the extent that such inaccuracies probably account for no more than a very small proportion of the difference between the two sets of results. I shall therefore presume that we must look for other reasons, and I now list the main contenders.

### BCS figures tap offences which are not reported to the police, and also some offences that are reported but not recorded.

This is an obvious reason why the BCS estimates 1993 crime levels to be nearly four times those of the recorded crime figures. However, it does not stop the media's 'revelations' when BCS results are published, that crime levels are much higher than originally thought.

It is quite reasonable to question whether the extra 'dark figure' of crime that the BCS taps is 'worth worrying about'. Are crimes which go unreported and unrecorded sufficiently serious to be included in recorded crime figures? The BCS asks victims who did not report why they did not do so, revealing that for many it is because they think what happened was not serious enough. But this said, it is not true to say that recorded crime statistics simply 'cream off' all and only serious crime. Many crimes go unreported (and unrecorded) for reasons other than triviality, and recorded crime statistics themselves include a proportion of trivial incidents.

Having addressed the differences in absolute levels of BCS and recorded crime, we need now to concentrate on the reasons why differences occur in the changes over time.

### The proportion of crime reported to the police changes over time.

A comparison of trends in BCS and recorded crime statistics suggests that the proportion of crime that is reported to the police has risen between 1981 and 1991, but then fallen back between 1991 and 1993.

Between 1981 and 1991, for the comparable sub-set of offences, the BCS estimated that crime rose by 49%,

whereas the recorded crime figures showed a 96% increase. That this difference is largely down to increased reporting is borne out by BCS estimates of the reporting rate rising from 31% in 1981 to 43% in 1991. This large increase is thought to be due to a combination of reasons, from increasing insurance cover to the greater ease with which reports can be made (eg. 24-hour phone-lines).

Between 1991 and 1993, the BCS increase (18%) was greater than for recorded crime (7%). This suggests a downturn in the reporting rate, particularly as the BCS estimated a fall from 43% in 1991 to 41% in 1993.

### The proportion of reported crime that is recorded by the police changes over time.

It may be surprising that not all crime reported to the police is recorded by them. Indeed, the BCS estimates that as much as a third of reported crimes are not recorded. Nevertheless, there are quite genuine reasons why this is so. The standard procedure for crime recording is that the police first examine the facts of an incident that has been reported to them to satisfy themselves that evidence exists. If it does, then the crime should be recorded. The police however may not always accept victims' accounts, or may question their interpretation of events. Some incidents may again be considered too trivial to warrant a crime report.

The BCS indicates that the overall proportion of recorded to reported crime changed little between 1981 and 1991, although there were some changes for individual offence groups.

There is some evidence from localised research (3) that indicates that the proportion of recorded to reported crime varies from force to force. This suggests that the standard procedure described above is open to different interpretations, which is quite plausible as the degree to which the facts should be examined is not clearly defined centrally. It may be in certain forces though.

## Media Allegations: True or False ?

The latest publication of BCS and recorded crime figures attracted much media attention, most of it critical. Many of the stories had the purpose of criticising government policies, and the figures were thus used, correctly or otherwise, to make political points.



Some of the more contentious statements are listed below, with my explanations as to whether they are true or false.

**“ Latest BCS figures contradict the suggestion that the crime situation is improving ”**

**False** The latest BCS figures estimate that, for the comparable sub-set of offences, the number of crimes rose by 18% between 1991 and 1993. By comparison, recorded crimes for the same sub- set also rose over this period, but only by 7%. It was only at the end of 1993 that recorded crime began to show substantial falls, enough to cause the total (for all offences) for the 12 months to June 1994 to be 5.5% down on the previous 12 months. We do not yet know what the BCS will show over this period, as we have to wait until autumn 1996 for the next set of BCS results that span 1993 and 1995.

**“ Recorded crime publications make no mention of BCS results ”**

**False** All official statistical publications that contain recorded crime figures make comparisons with BCS results and describe the differences between the two sources. The press allegations perhaps refer to the press release and conference in September 1994 that did not mention the content of the BCS findings. However, they reflect the emphasis that Ministers have wished to place on each source. Publications containing both sets of results were included in the press packs.

**“ Latest recorded crime figures are falling, but they mask an increase in violent crime ”**

**True** Overall recorded crime fell by 5.5% in the 12 months to June 1994, but within this total violent crime (violence against the person, sexual offences and robbery) rose by 6%. Violent offences account for only 6% of all recorded crime, and so only marginally influence the overall trend. Offences of violence are accepted as being more serious than most others, but no system of weighting them accordingly is considered appropriate.

**“ The latest falls in recorded crime figures reflect ‘massaging’ by the Home Office ”**

**False** There has certainly been no massaging by the Home Office, as its rules for counting and defining crime have not changed in at least fifteen years.

**“ Some multiple offences are entered singly in the recorded crime statistics ”**

**True** The Home Office’s ‘continuous offence’ rule (which also has not changed in fifteen years) states that any series of offences with a common pattern, such as the same location at the same time, should be recorded as just one offence. While this may understate the true level of crimes recorded, it might be argued that it more effectively measures police workload, as such series are likely to prompt a single police investigation.

**Conclusions**

I have described the two main sources of crime statistics, pointing out the strengths and weaknesses of each. The main conclusion to draw from this is that one should be used in conjunction with the other in painting a statistical picture of crime.

Many of the press articles that have used crime statistics have tended to use both measures. However, some have placed differing emphases on them.

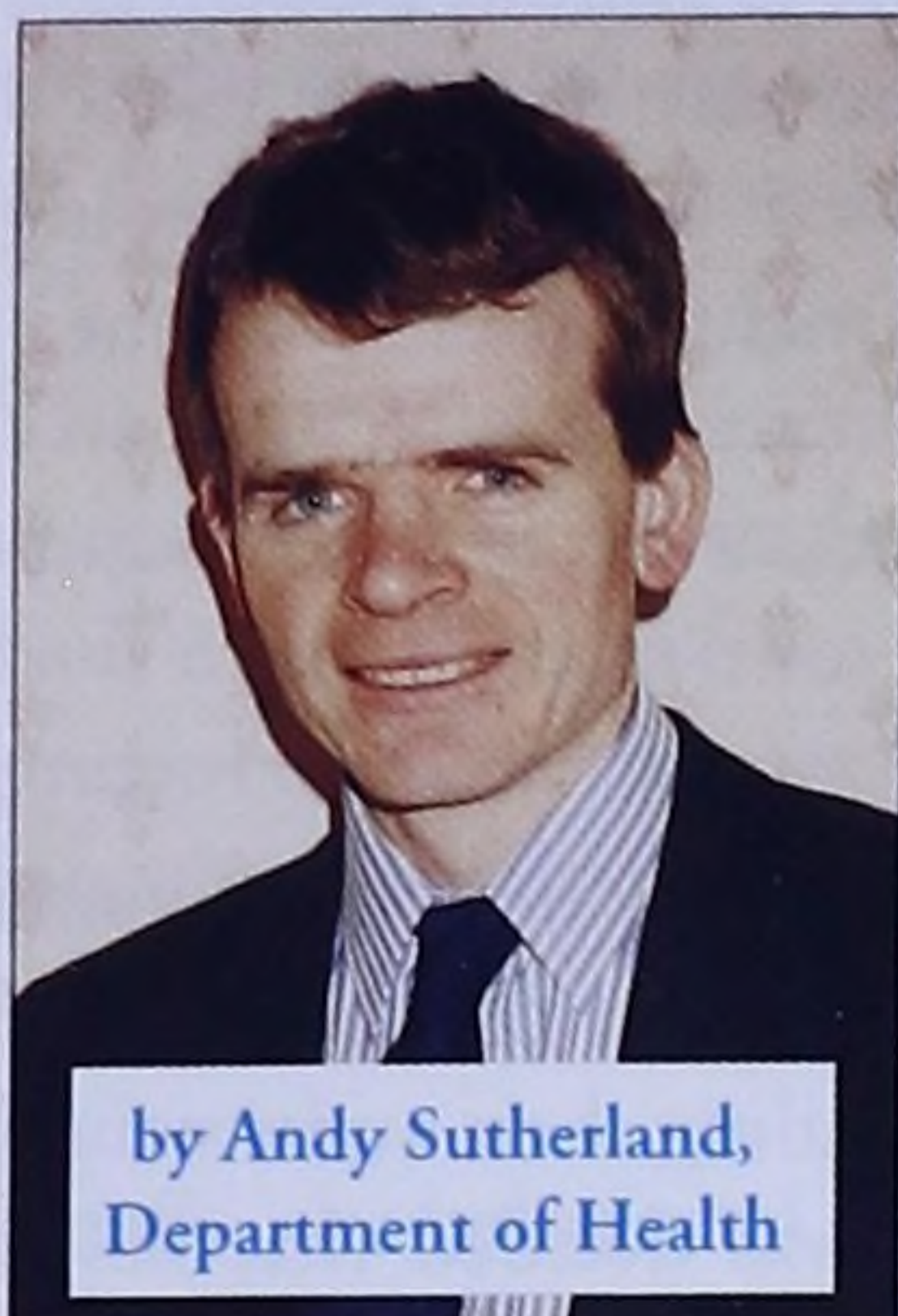
In the article, it has sometimes not been possible to provide an quantified assessment of the two measures’ strengths and weaknesses that I have addressed. This is an area that we must tackle in the future, as we continue to strive for improved quality and consistency of the BCS and recorded crime statistics.

**References**

- 1 Mayhew P. et al. Trends in Crime: Findings from the 1994 British Crime Survey. Home Office Research Findings No.14.
- 2 Notifiable Offences, England and Wales, July 1993 to June 1994. Home Office Statistical Bulletin Issue 4/94.
- 3 Farrington D., Dowds E. (1985): ‘Disentangling criminal behaviour and police reaction.’ Farrington D. and Gunn J.(Eds). Reactions to Crime: the public, the police, courts and prisons. Chichester: John Wiley.



# Hospital and ambulance league tables for England



by Andy Sutherland,  
Department of Health

## Summary

'HOW HEALTHY IS YOUR HOSPITAL?' Just one of the headlines which greeted publication of the first set of NHS performance ('league') tables for England on 29 June 1994. Publication marked a milestone in a process which had been underway for over a year,

involving cooperation between many different branches of the NHS Executive and the wider Department of Health. In this article Andy Sutherland, the statistician on the production team, describes what happened, how the process worked, and what was learned from the results.

## Introduction

The Government's Citizens Charter initiative, introduced in July 1991, required public sector bodies, including the NHS, to introduce charters setting out standards which the users of their services could expect, and to publish the standards actually achieved.

The Patient's Charter, introduced in October 1991 as part of this initiative, set out the standards which patients and other users of NHS services could expect. The NHS performance tables, published in June, were the first in an annual series showing what service patients actually received from the NHS, against the standards set in the Charter. Publication should act as a lever for improvement in the standards measured, by encouraging poor performers to seek explanations for their performance, and to improve it to match the standards achieved by the best.

## Production

Production of the tables was a team effort, led jointly by Judy Sanderson (a policymaker from the NHS Executive's Patient's Charter Unit) and myself (a statistician from the Executive's Management Information and Analysis Bureau). The team included computer special-

ists (who supervised the design and production of the software required to process the data), information officers, responsible for developing the design of the publication, and for disseminating the data, and policymakers responsible for the various issues (e.g. hospital waiting times) covered by the indicators included in the tables. We kept in close touch with the Welsh and Northern Ireland Offices, who were to publish their own league tables on the same date, throughout. The Scottish Office published similar tables at the end of November.

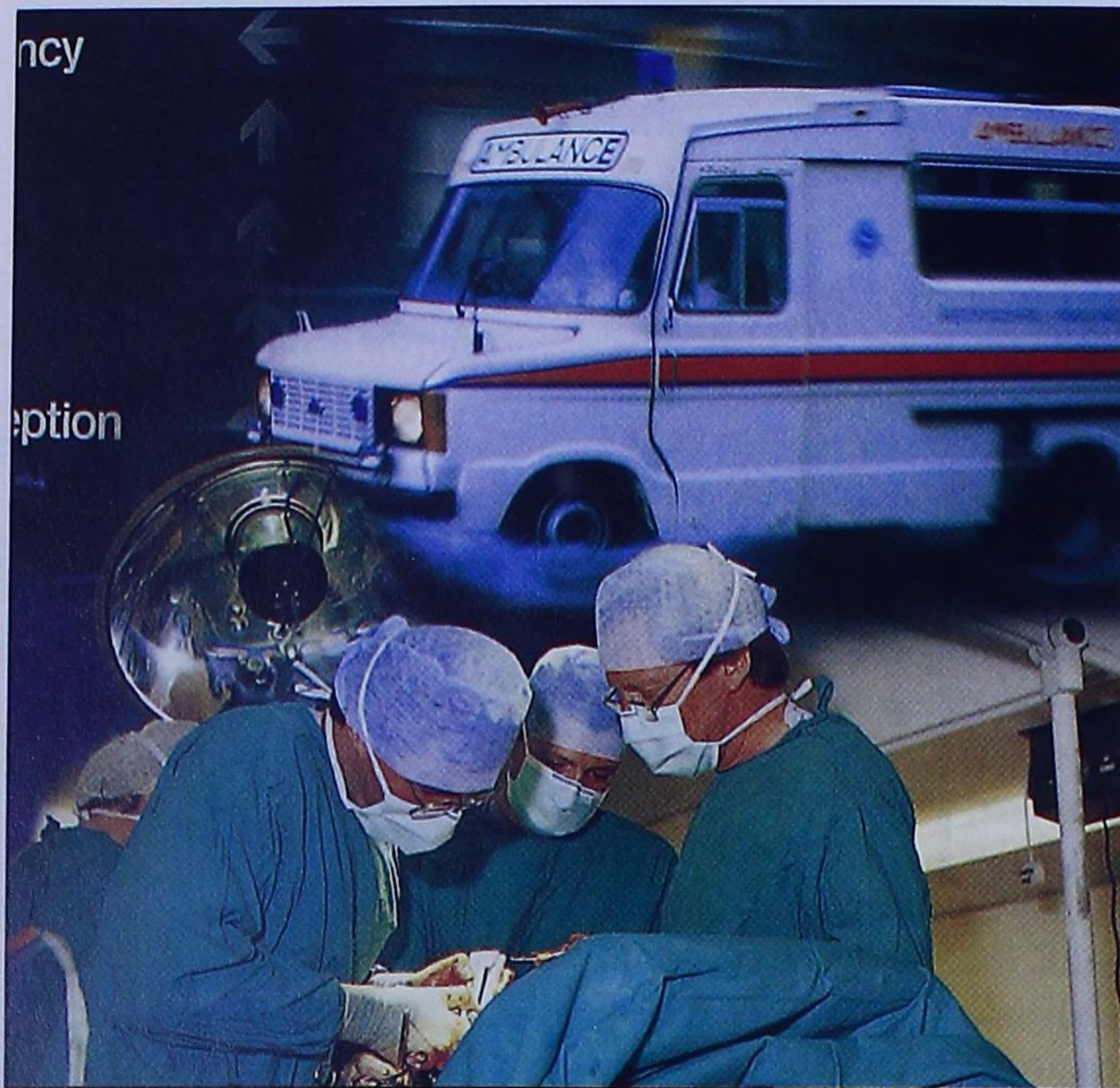
## Indicators

The indicators were chosen in the first instance to reflect performance against a range of Patient's Charter standards. They needed to be based on data which were available, and which were 'hard' and of good quality. The indicators chosen are listed at the end of the article. The Accident and Emergency, outpatient, cancelled operation and ambulance indicators gave direct measures of performance against Patient's Charter standards. The waiting times indicator gives performance in an area covered by a Patient's Charter guarantee (of admission within 2 years, or 18 months for a hip, knee, or cataract operation), while the day case indicator shows which hospitals are able to treat medically suitable patients without requiring an overnight stay.

## Quality Control

One of the lessons learned from the earlier Performance Tables for schools published by the Department for Education was the need to ensure that those reported on (in our case the NHS hospitals and Trusts) accepted that the data published was a true record of their performance. Accordingly, data quality and ownership were a vital part of the project. Chief Executives of units reported on were required personally to sign off the statistical return giving their performance, before it was submitted, and indeed returns without such signatures were sent back. It was therefore clear that the unit or Trust was aware of its performance, and could not argue that a performance which turned out to be relatively poor was the result of a Departmental error. If there had been an error on the part of the information provider, this was clearly seen to be their responsibility. Auditing of systems





was not always possible, if we wished to keep the boundary values on round numbers and the boundaries consistent within groups of indicators. We chose to exclude percentages based on a denominator of 30 or less - a compromise between avoiding excluding data and avoiding including unrepresentative data.

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### Audit failures

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Rather late in the day, it became obvious that, for some indicators, the number of hospitals' systems failing their audit would be significant. It was decided that failed system results would be presented, but would be distinguished by the absence of stars. This ensured that the reported performance was made available to the public but with a clear indication of where improvements to information systems were needed.

for producing the indicators was done by the Audit Commission, who looked at sampling issues (where indicator values were from samples), definition and coverage and quality control checks.

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### Output

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A market research firm was employed to test public acceptability of different styles of publication. Presenting 23 indicators on 400 plus units and trusts in a way that could be digested by the average member of the public was a challenge. The research indicated that what the public wanted above all was something which showed more simply than a percentage figure what was a good and what was a bad performance. Of possible methods of doing this, star ratings attached to the percentages were by far the most popular.

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### Issues

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Among the issues which cropped up during the production cycle was *what star rating system should be used?* The one chosen was a compromise, 5 stars should represent a good performance, 1 star a bad performance, and the full range should be used (otherwise the star system is not an aid to interpretation). We attempted to adjust the boundaries so that, say 3 stars always represented the middle 20-30 per cent of performers, but this

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### Lessons

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The stars were a great success. While dismissed as a gimmick by some, they helped journalists and other commentators to quickly synthesise and communicate the key issues, and so enhanced the impact of the exercise.

The policy on audit failures worked - and should result in better quality data next year. Highlighting problems through omitting stars was a powerful incentive to getting the systems right.

The accountability of chief executives for their data is important. Despite this we found many small errors in returns, but the public retraction of figures by one errant hospital, where the Chief Executive could not escape the fact that she had signed them off as correct will have reinforced the seriousness of data quality.

Good organisation and efficient administrative systems are essential in exercises such as this, where large volumes of data are to be processed and interpreted to a very tight timetable. The entire process of collection of data returns, validation, processing, summary, checking with Chief executives, production and publication of 150,000 copies of a report, briefing Ministers, regional offices and the units themselves was accomplished within three months of the end of the period reported on.



The close collaboration throughout between statistical and policy divisions, and with the others involved, was vital. Each party has something to offer outside the 'demarcation lines', so that in truly joint exercises such as this the whole can be much more effective than the sum of the individual contributions.

The policymakers needed the practical and technical contribution of the statisticians, but equally statisticians have much to learn from policymakers and others about presentation and impact. There is little point in producing statistics which are above reproach if nobody uses them.

Finally, the ephemeral nature of publicity never fails to amaze. League tables made a splash on the front page of most papers the following day, and the TV on the day, but were quickly pushed off by Prince Charles' plane accident. Still, a survey conducted for the Department showed that 60% of people had heard about the tables, and we did make page 13 of the Sun!

### The future ...

Planning is underway for the next set of tables, to be published towards the end of June. The tables will be expanded to include, amongst other indicators, waiting times for first outpatient appointment. We are also thinking further ahead, and considering whether indicators of clinical performance could be produced, and, if so, what they should be.

### Reference

**The Patient's Charter Hospital and Ambulance Services comparative performance guide 1993-94.**

Department of Health, 1994.

### Indicators

*The indicators to be supplied by each hospital or Trust were:*

**Accident and Emergency indicator** - for patients attending Accident and Emergency departments, the percentage seen and assessed within 5 minutes of arrival

**Outpatient indicator** - for patients attending outpatient clinics, the percentage seen within 30 minutes of their appointment time

**Cancelled operations indicator** - the number of cases where a patient was not treated in accordance with the Patient's Charter cancellation of operation standard

**Day case indicator** - for each of four procedures, the percentage of patients undergoing those procedures who were treated as day cases, and were therefore admitted, treated and sent home the same day

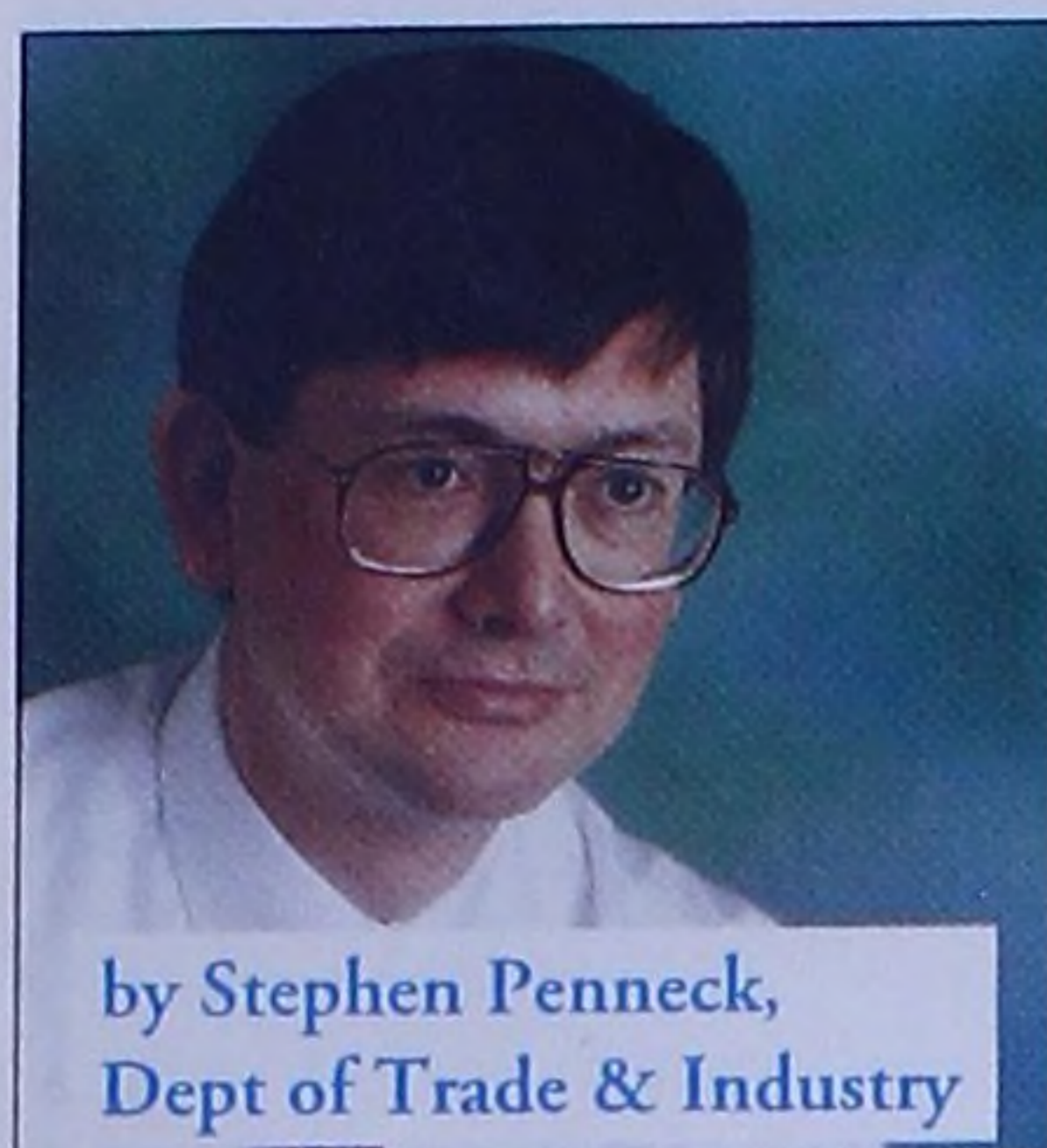
**Waiting times indicator** - for each of eight specialties, the percentage of patients admitted who had waited less than 3 months, and less than 12 months for admission

*and, by each ambulance authority:*

**Ambulance indicator** - the percentage of emergency ambulances arriving within 19 minutes (rural) or 14 minutes (urban) of receipt of a 999 call.



## Ukraine : Statistics for a Market Economy



by Stephen Penneck,  
Dept of Trade & Industry

### Introduction

Flying high above the forests of Central Europe, I noticed the River Danube below me. It struck me as a symbol of the divide I was crossing from a Western European society to one of the former Republics of the

Soviet Union; a divide being overcome by the Ukraine in its transition to a market economy.

I had been asked, at short notice, to contribute to a training course on "Statistics for a Market Economy" being held for Ukrainian Government Statisticians in Kiev in September 1994. The slowness of progress for the Ukraine since its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991 has underlined the difficulties that such centrally managed economies face in moving towards a market economy structure. Decisions based on market information are an essential ingredient for a market economy. Good decisions need good statistics.

Ukrainian statisticians face daunting problems. Not only are they changing the base of the statistical system to reflect the change to a market economy, they are also being asked to monitor the transition process itself. The training course had been set up by the Overseas Development Administration as part of the UK contribution under its Know-How Fund. Strathclyde University had been contracted to run the course, lasting two weeks, and provision had been made for a Government statistician to assist. My three days with the course was intended to give some practical experience based on my own knowledge of short term economic indicators.

The course was primarily aimed at senior technical staff in the Ukrainian Ministry of Statistics. Its purpose was, firstly, to explain the principles and practices in the National Accounts and Balance of Payments. Secondly, it was intended to assist Ukrainian statisticians to modify and develop their accounts so as to make them more useful for decision makers in a market economy and more consistent with international standards. My contribution was to consist of a presentation on economic

indicators, giving background information on how they are used in the UK and some detail on those in which I have been mainly involved (retail sales and index of production). I also planned to be available to assist in workshop sessions on National Accounts and Balance of Payments.

Arriving in Kiev, the difficulties of an economy in transition were apparent: a high rate of inflation, a rapidly depreciating Ukrainian currency against the dollar, a significant hidden economy and a retail trade which had made little movement towards a typical British High Street. Much of Kiev has been rebuilt since the second world war. The few cathedrals and monasteries that have survived from the early christian 12th century Kievan empire are of remarkable beauty, while the Golden Gates, surmounted by the Church of the Annunciation, are a lasting monument.

My presentation on economic indicators stressed that I was speaking on the topic from the point of view of the UK. It included the main UK indicators, desirable properties of indicators, their use for policy making, cyclical indicators and how the retail sales index and the index of production are compiled. Desirable properties include the need for them to relate to policy requirements; to cover the whole economy; to be up to date, stable and accurate; at constant prices, where relevant; and with long back series. Because the two economies are different the requirements for indicators for the Ukraine will not be the same as for the UK. The UK is dependent on overseas trade, has well developed financial markets and a large services sector. This is not necessarily the case in the Ukraine. In addition indicators must be relevant to policy needs, which differ between the two countries. In discussing the effect of indicators on Government policy, I was able to refer to a front page UK news article a few days previously showing how a rise in interest rates was claimed to have had a decisive effect in ruling out tax cuts for the UK budget.

The course participants were particularly interested in the technical details of compiling the retail sales index and the index of production. A question asked on the estimation of trends led to a further discussion on seasonal adjustment and the X-11 method. My offer to





take them through the X-11 method the following day was greeted with some enthusiasm, and I spent that night putting together a worked example showing the decomposition of time series and how the X-11 method worked. This presentation was well received the following morning, and led to a request for further documentation.

The workshops which were to have formed part of the course did not materialise, the Ukrainians preferring straight lectures. However, I was able to introduce some discussion on the introduction of Inostrat, (the European Community system of collecting intra-EC trade statistics), and on the difficulties of collecting overseas direct investment figures.

The need to work through translators, who were very able, prevented that spontaneity which is necessary to overcome the natural reserve between two cultures. Consequently, the audience reaction was not as participative as we have come to expect in the West. The best reactions came in response to detailed descriptions of how the statistics are put together, rather than discussion of the concepts.

At the end I left copies of my notes and some relevant articles. I received a number of requests for further articles and books from the UK, as they are difficult to obtain in the Ukraine. Since arriving back I have sent articles on cyclical indicators, seasonal adjustment, overseas transactions and Inostrat. ODA have been helpful in providing copies of books.

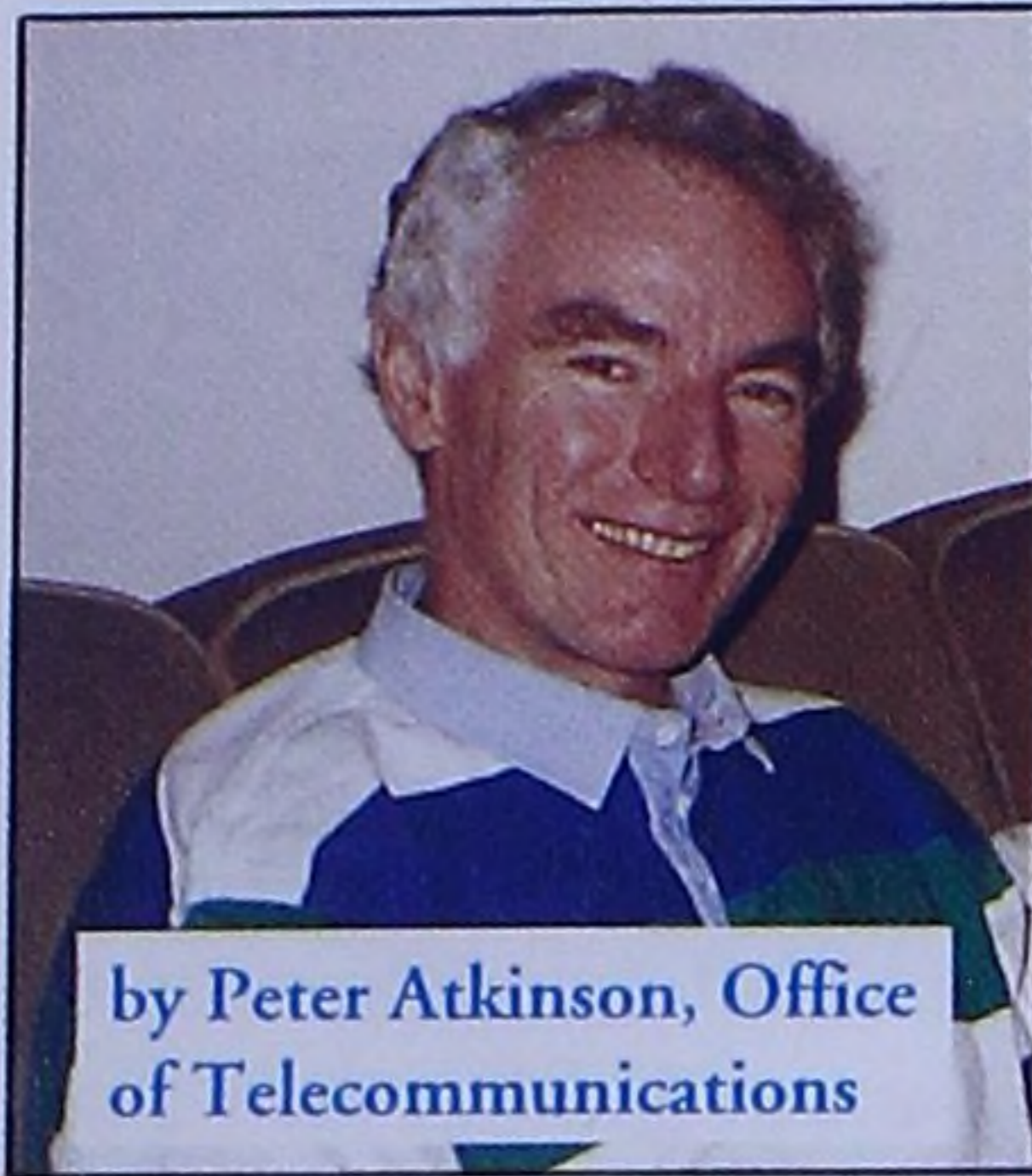
### How far did the course meet its objectives ?

The absence of the planned workshop sessions probably meant that the second objective of the course, that of assisting the Ukrainian statisticians to develop their own statistical series, was probably not fully met. A more interactive approach, requiring more pre-course discussion with Ukrainian officials would have been needed to achieve this. The course fully covered the concepts and definitions behind the statistics, but I feel that the participants particularly appreciated the opportunity to discuss practical problems with a fellow Government Statistician.

Flying back home I noted that the River Danube was still there. It is difficult for GSS members to spare the time away from our desks, but the GSS is uniquely placed in the UK to advise on developing Government statistics overseas, and even short visits such as mine are valued. Whether the right decisions are made in Eastern Europe over the next few decades will depend on the information available to decision makers. I urge my colleagues to find the time to contribute their skills to the momentous task ahead.



# Measuring Quality of Service on Cellular Radio Networks



by Peter Atkinson, Office of Telecommunications

## Introduction and overview

Over a 5 year period between Autumn 1988 and Autumn 1993 a multi-disciplinary team from OFTEL, which included GSS statisticians, devoted considerable resources to-

wards an investigation of the quality of service offered by the cellular radio operators, Cellnet and Vodafone.

The culmination of this work was an independent survey carried out over a twelve month period commencing in October 1992 during which market research staff drove around Great Britain making and receiving calls on the two cellular networks. A feature of the survey was the use of automatic call generating equipment. This was the first time anywhere in the world that such equipment had been used to survey the performance of mobile networks. The philosophy and technology employed in the survey are now being exported to other countries.

The survey followed attempts to make use of existing sources of data available from the operators' computer systems and consideration of a similar survey approach in which the calls would have been made by market research staff rather than by computers.

This article describes how the decision to carry out such a survey was reached and provides details of the survey methodology. The statistics obtained from the survey are presented. They show a level of performance during the period covered by the fieldwork which was much higher than the perceived level of performance in the early stages of the investigation.

## OFTEL's Responsibilities

One of the duties of the Director General of Telecommunications is to promote the interests of consumers, purchasers and other users in the United Kingdom in respect of the prices charged for, and the quality and variety of, telecommunications services provided and telecommunication apparatus supplied. In 1988, quality of service was a source of concern on both fixed and mobile networks. OFTEL

was already monitoring British Telecom's performance by means of quality of service reports regularly submitted by BT to the Director General and by means of independent surveys. Mercury also started to issue reports on its quality of service in 1988.

There are many different aspects to quality of service in the telecommunications field. These range from the provision of service to a new customer, to the ability of the customer to make and receive calls of acceptable voice quality and to the way in which the company deals with problems perceived by the customer on any aspect of the service. The survey carried out concentrated on the ability of the customer to make and receive calls and to complete the call without it being prematurely terminated.

## OFTEL's report on the preliminary findings

OFTEL's Report, which was published in May 1989, concluded that neither Cellnet nor Vodafone had plans at the beginning of 1988 which were able to cope with the rate of growth in customers which actually occurred. Growth had consistently outpaced the most optimistic forecasts. The Director General called upon the operators to increase the rate at which they were developing their networks by spreading the geographical coverage and intensifying coverage in areas of high demand. He said that he would be monitoring progress closely and proposed that quality of service statistics be published on a regular basis.

Following discussions between OFTEL and the operators it was agreed that the operators would work with OFTEL to develop statistics which would enable congestion on radio channels to be monitored and compared. Coverage of the country is by means of a cell plan with each cell being served principally by one base station. Each cell is allocated a number of radio channels. Congestion is the situation in which all radio channels are in use when a call attempt is made.

## Statistics produced by the operators

The intention was that statistics would be released monthly. In the event only two sets of statistics were published as further discussions with the operators revealed problems with missing data. The resolution of these problems seemed to open the door for recommencing publication of switch generated statistics early in 1990. However, independent





A 'Buzzard'

which had offices near the M4 but left something to be desired from the statistical point of view.

The priority of the Working Group was then to consider ways of reducing the cost of the survey. This led to consideration of the possibility of employing computers instead of humans to make and receive calls. Automatic call generating equipment developed by the Derby-based firm Rotadata was used. This equipment was known as "Buzzards". Over the course of the survey the cost of the equipment proved to be much less than the cost would have been had survey staff been making/receiving calls at both the mobile and fixed ends.

surveys commissioned by one of the operators raised further doubts about the validity of these data. These doubts arose from the facility which exists to vary for operational reasons the signal strength threshold which must be achieved to access the network.

This problem proved to be the last straw as regards attempts to produce comparable switch generated statistics. In Autumn 1990 the Director General of OFTEL therefore took the decision that an independent drive-round survey was the only way forward to obtain statistics which would be meaningful from a user perspective. A Working Group chaired by OFTEL's Policy Branch dealing with mobile telephony and consisting of representatives of the two networks and OFTEL's own technical and statistical experts was set up to carry out the planning for the survey.

### Planning for the Drive-Round Survey

The Working Group drew up a specification and invited tenders in Spring 1991 from a selection of market research and engineering consultancies. The specification did not define a sampling scheme but indicated the level of accuracy required for estimates to be representative of the experience of subscribers in Great Britain as a whole. A wide variety of tenders were received. One proposal suggested a relatively small number of routes, most of which included the M4 at some point. This would have been convenient to the firm in question

The project was split into two parts. Part 1 would be the design of a statistical scheme in the form of precise routes to be followed by survey vehicles. The second part would be the actual carrying out of the survey based on this "sampling" scheme.

The first stage was put out to tender in June 1991 and Chameleon Ltd won the contract. Chameleon was asked to design alternative schemes based on 2 and 3 car surveys and was provided with the following information for each network: the claimed coverage areas; the volumes of successful incoming and outgoing calls for each base station; and data on the variability of call traffic by time of day.

### The Survey Design

Chameleon decided to employ postcode districts as a means of allocating the data geographically. The first stage of sample organisation was therefore to allocate each network's base station data to the appropriate postcode district and thereby plot the data for each network. An unweighted average of data for the two companies converted to this form was used to produce a sampling frame which was fair for each of the companies.

Having conducted tests to determine whether there might be clustering problems arising from variations in performance between base stations and concluded that these effects would be small, Chameleon employed a



higher tier of postcode geography - the post town - to produce an outline route design. The Autoroute system, which is a computer based method of optimising journeys given selected end and intermediate points, was employed to construct routes each covering 6 geographically adjacent post towns, and within each post town a sub-route lasting 1 hour in duration. The number of times that each of the 120 post towns should be included in the sampling scheme was calculated from the data on call volumes.

Having designed the routes, the sampling scheme was balanced over time by stratifying the selected routes into 6 broad regions and systematically allocating them to the 3 months in a quarter. Shift patterns were designed so that calls would be appropriately represented for each month in respect of the hourly distribution of cellular traffic. The routes were then systematically allocated to areas within the 6 broad regions. Thus, the survey was designed to be self-weighting.

Chameleon produced alternative sampling schemes based on 120 routes (2 cars) and on 180 routes (3 cars). The intention was to publish results which met the required level of accuracy over a 3 month period. The requirement was that a difference of one percentage point between the estimates for the two operators should be statistically significant (at the 95% level) for call failure rates of up to 10%. Although it was not possible to estimate the true standard errors in advance of the fieldwork without a prolonged trial being undertaken, it was subsequently decided that a two car survey covering 120 routes in each 3 month period would be sufficient to allow for publication of results on a 3 monthly basis.

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### **Planning for the second stage of the survey**

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The specification included the alternative plans based on 120 and 180 routes designed by Chameleon to take about 6 hours to drive in the course of a single weekday. The contract for Part 2 of the survey was awarded to "Survey Research Associates" (SRA) in February 1992. There followed extensive testing of the Rotadata equipment by the operators and SRA. Deficiencies identified during both the testing and the trial had to be rectified and this led to delays.

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### **Fieldwork and monitoring procedures**

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Eventually, all parties were sufficiently happy with the equipment for a start date of 28 September 1992 to be agreed and the two cars were assigned to routes beginning in Inverness and Norwich respectively. However, the sense of euphoria and relief associated with having at last got under way soon evaporated when SRA reported that the car due to start at Inverness had crashed in bad weather before a single call had been made. This unfortunate setback was resolved by the repair of the car with the 10 routes missed being rescheduled at the end of the quarter.

At the end of each shift an additional radio call was made to transmit the data from the mobile to SRA's central database. Data were provided on computer disks to OFTEL and the two operators on a weekly basis. This allowed for continuous monitoring of the progress of the survey which largely consisted of checks on the operation of the Buzzards and the driving of the routes by SRA staff.

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### **What data was recorded ?**

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Much consideration was given to the pattern of calls to be made by the Buzzards. It was recognised that users will vary in their reaction to a failed call attempt. At one extreme, some users will make repeated call attempts in quick succession until their call is successfully set up or until they conclude that there is little possibility of getting through at that time. Such users may have a very urgent call to make or may be of a certain personality who reacts in this way regardless of the urgency. At the other extreme, some users will abandon their call after a failed first attempt, perhaps with the intention of trying again later. It was only practicable to reflect an average user and this was achieved by the Buzzards being programmed to make a single repeat attempt 15 seconds after a first attempt had been detected as a failure.

Four different types of call were made and generally considered separately in the statistical analysis. These were land to mobile first attempts, land to mobile repeat attempts, mobile to land first attempts and mobile to land repeat attempts. The pattern of calling for each



**TABLE I Success rates for first attempts**

	<i>Percentages</i>		
	<b>Period 1</b>	<b>Period 2</b>	<b>Period 3</b>
<b>Mobile to fixed network calls</b>			
<b>● Cellnet</b>			
Successfully set-up	96.4 ±1.29	97.6 ±0.34	97.8 ±0.38
Of which successfully completed	96.0 ±0.51	97.3 ±0.29	97.2 ±0.48
Successfully set-up and completed	92.5 ±1.61	95.0 ±0.56	95.1 ±0.53
<b>● Vodafone</b>			
Successfully set-up	97.9 ±0.31	98.3 ±0.37	98.4 ±0.30
Of which successfully completed	97.9 ±0.35	98.8 ±0.30	98.9 ±0.17
Successfully set-up and completed	95.8 ±0.47	97.1 ±0.50	97.3 ±0.41
<b>Fixed network to mobile calls</b>			
<b>● Cellnet</b>			
Successfully set-up	93.8 ±0.73	96.6 ±0.80	96.2 ±0.82
Of which successfully completed	95.7 ±0.59	97.6 ±0.47	98.1 ±0.38
Successfully set-up and completed	89.8 ±0.94	94.3 ±0.91	94.4 ±0.89
<b>● Vodafone</b>			
Successfully set-up	94.1 ±0.59	96.3 ±0.72	97.0 ±0.54
Of which successfully completed	98.2 ±0.43	98.8 ±0.35	99.2 ±0.26
Successfully set-up and completed	92.4 ±0.67	95.1 ±0.87	96.2 ±0.58

vehicle was 2 calls from the mobile units to the fixed network followed by 1 call from the fixed network to the mobile units, plus in each instance any repeat attempts. This ratio reflected the ratio of calls made by users of the networks.

Each call was allocated a 3 minute window. A first attempt which was successfully set up was held for the completion of quality checks. Repeat attempts were held for a subset of these tests as less of the call window was then available.



A vast amount of engineering data was recorded by the Buzzards and provided information to the operators on the performance of their networks. This was much too detailed for OFTEL's needs. *The fields which were of particular relevance to the publication of statistics were:*

- **Type of call** - whether mobile or land originated;
- **Type of call attempt** - whether first or repeat attempt;
- **Response type** - 12 different conditions indicating whether the call was successfully set up or, if not, what had happened;
- **Type of call release** - whether the call ended normally or failed to end normally (eg dropped prematurely)

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## The results

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OFTEL published results for each of the three quarters of surveying - in March, September and December 1993. Although referred to as quarters, the need to re-run certain routes and to introduce software changes in the Buzzards meant that the periods did not correspond to calendar quarters as had been intended when the field-work commenced. Table 1 shows a subset of these results - reflecting the outcomes of first attempts only - together with confidence limits produced using the method of balanced repeated replications.

OFTEL recognises that the quality of service achievable on the cellular networks is necessarily lower than on the fixed link networks. For example, the proportion of calls made on BT's network which fail is rather less than 1%. Because the cellular networks use a mobile radio technology the range of possible problems is considerably greater than on fixed networks, and when calls are made to or from a moving vehicle the likelihood of a call failing is increased further.

It is thought that the quality of service offered by the cellular networks during the survey periods was significantly better than had been the case at the start of the investigation. The operators had invested heavily in their networks thereby increasing the capacity available. And the recession had led to lower growth in the numbers of subscribers during 1991 and 1992 than had been the case previously.

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## The future

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OFTEL continues to monitor the switch generated statistics produced by Vodafone and Cellnet in respect of their analogue services which still dominate the cellular market in terms of numbers of subscribers. However, there are now four digital services in competition with the traditional analogue services. These are the digital (GSM) services offered by Cellnet and Vodafone and the PCN services offered by Mercury One-2-One and Orange. OFTEL has been working with Mercury and Orange on the development of a set of indicators on PCN quality of service and is currently reassessing its role in this more competitive environment. At the instigation of the Director General the fixed network operators formed an Industry Working Group, including representatives of users, to consider and develop quality of service indicators which will be comparable between operators. By the time this article is published a similar exercise involving the cellular operators should be under way. It is likely, however, that any future survey work will concentrate on hand-portable cellular telephones, rather than car telephones, as the former now comprise a large majority of the UK market.

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## Conclusion

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Despite the difficulties in getting the survey under way, it served a useful purpose in confirming the improvement in quality of service on the networks. It was also an achievement in its pioneering of new techniques, using equipment manufactured by a British company. OFTEL recognises the contributions made by Cellnet and Vodafone and by SRA to the success of the survey. As well as funding the survey, the operators carried out detailed and rigorous testing of the Rotadata equipment to ensure that the Buzzards were properly recording events. SRA persevered through technical problems, which they could not have anticipated when they tendered for the work, and logistical problems associated with driving to tight schedules, often hindered by weather and traffic conditions.

A fuller (unpublished) version of this article, giving more information on the background to the survey and on the methodology employed together with a wider range of results, is available from the author (fax 0171 634 8948).



# Intrastat: Electronic Data Interchange (EDI)



## Introduction

The T&SO (Tariff and Statistical Office) supplies trade statistics to the Central Statistical Office and many other users. The introduction of the Single Market in 1993 broke the tradition that trade statistics

could be collected entirely from Customs declarations. A new method of collection, known as "Intrastat", had to be devised for trade between Member States of the European Union. This article provides some background to the Intrastat procedures and describes the role of EDI (Electronic Data Interchange) in the collection of Intrastat data.

## Pre-Single Market

Before the Single Market was formed in 1993, trade statistics were collected as part of Customs procedures. All imported or exported goods had to be declared to Customs and Excise. Over a period of twenty years, Customs computer systems were gradually developed to a point where T&SO received over half of its trade data electronically. The data was captured by DEPS (Departmental Entry Processing System) which links ports and airports directly to Customs computer systems and was found to be an efficient means of collecting data for trade statistics. DEPS has since been replaced by the CHIEF (Customs Handling of Import and Export Freight) system which is now used to capture extra-EC trade data (ie with non-EC countries).

## The Impact of the Single Market

As Customs declarations are not required for goods moving in free circulation within the EC, T&SO could no longer rely on Customs procedures as the source of statistics for EC trade so CHIEF could not be used for the collection of these statistics.

The Intrastat system was introduced to collect statistics relating to movements of goods between member states and requires traders to submit monthly statistical returns

to T&SO if their intra-EC trade exceeds an annual threshold. For 1995 the UK threshold is set at £150,000 for both arrivals (intra-EC imports) and dispatches (intra-EC exports). Approximately 30,000 traders submit detailed intra-EC statistics to T&SO on a regular monthly basis.

## The effect on T&SO data capture

Before the formation of the Single Market, there was scant use of EDI solely for trade statistics purposes. CHIEF and the Period Entry Customs system provided trade data electronically as a by product. Throughout the development of Intrastat electronic data capture was recognized as the most efficient means of data collection. Benefits for both C&E and businesses were identified because errors and inefficiencies inherent in manual keying of paper declarations could be eliminated. Therefore, in preparation for Intrastat, C&E set up the EDCS (Electronic Data Capture Service) to receive data electronically from traders. Apart from Intrastat, EDCS also receives data for VAT ESLs (EC Sales Listings) and the Customs Period Entry system. Some businesses use one EDI transmission to supply all three requirements.

## What is EDI ?

EDI is an electronic declaration created by the trader's computer system which is then submitted to C&E thus avoiding the preparation and keying of paper declarations. In Customs we tend to refer to all data submitted electronically as EDI although in practice there are two distinct types, direct and indirect. Direct EDI means that data is sent directly from a trader's computer system to the C&E system. EDCS only accepts data that is transmitted through a commercial network which are called VANS (Value Added Network Service). EDCS is currently linked to seven commercial VANS. Indirect EDI is where a disk or tape is used to transport the data. The data arrives by post or courier and is physically loaded into the EDCS system.

Use of EDI for Intrastat exceeded initial expectations which had been based on trader surveys. On average, over 1,500 traders use EDI to supply Intrastat data each month. Despite this, the amount of data keyed from



paper by T&SO has increased since Intrastat began. This increase is partly due to the fact that agents and freight forwarders, who had access to Customs DEPS and CHIEF systems to gain Customs clearance of goods, are no longer supplying the data. Instead Intrastat data is submitted by individual businesses directly to T&SO.

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### EDI message standards

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Data must be presented to EDCS in a recognizable "message" format which requires a technical specification. The message, called SEMDEC (Single European Market Declaration), was designed and publicized by C&E. It conforms to the EDIFACT (Electronic Data Interchange for Administration, Commerce and Transport) structure and only these are accepted. EDIFACT, also known as UN EDIFACT, is an international set of EDI message standards approved by the CCTA (Government Centre for Information Systems) for use in government. A further message INSTAT, which is used for Intrastat in other member states is under consideration for use in the UK.

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### Start-up problems

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When Intrastat began, the EDCS rejection rate for incoming messages was high. Initially, nearly a third of all receipts were unsatisfactory in some way. Difficulties with both the message standards and the validity of data were encountered for a number of reasons.

Although an EDCS test service is available to traders there is no requirement for systems to be tested before messages can be transmitted. The UK free market philosophy was to rely on commercially developed software and as a consequence in excess of a hundred different packages were produced. There is, no official certification of the software and therefore no control over its quality. Any trader who is required to make monthly Intrastat declarations may use EDI. The emphasis is on allowing choice and avoiding burdens on business. This is in contrast to the Customs Period Entry system where for revenue and Customs control reasons a trader's computer system is checked rigorously before EDI transmissions are allowed. Another problem was with large "parcels" of EDI messages where one message in error delays the whole parcel. Our system has been enhanced to overcome this.

Although not purely an EDI phenomenon, we also found that Intrastat data was not as aggregated as trade statistics data previously received from Customs sources. Businesses themselves sent Intrastat data and they worked on a different basis from the shipping and forwarding agents previously involved. Those that had developed Intrastat to link into their invoicing or order processing systems sent us data at invoice item level. One company sent in over 70,000 lines of data for one Intrastat declaration. This had serious implications for the capacity of EDCS and trade statistics systems and for processing timescales. We have been working actively to encourage businesses to aggregate data for identical transactions within the same reporting period.

The EDCS error rate is now very low. This has been achieved through the combination of a front end error system and trader education. Where possible errors identified soon after the receipt of data are corrected in conjunction with the trader concerned. Returning data to traders and the resubmission process has serious implications for the tight deadlines involved in producing trade statistics to the prescribed timetable and is not favoured by T&SO if avoidable. Returning direct EDI data that is in error is not possible with our current system and monitoring the resubmission of rejected data is also very difficult.

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### Other member states

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Other member states tend to use EC or nationally developed software for Intrastat purposes. This was distributed free. Eurostat (The Statistical Office of the European Communities) developed the IDEP (Intrastat Data Entry Package) and the Dutch, who have the largest Intrastat electronic declaration take-up, developed the IRIS (International Registration for International Trade Statistics) system. The UK relied on the UK software market to develop Intrastat packages and has not participated in IDEP, IRIS or any scheme for centrally developed and distributed software.

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### EDICOM funding

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The European Commission's programme, known as EDICOM (EDI in Commerce) is used to promote EDI for Intrastat across the European Union. Under this



programme funds are distributed to Member States against action plans designed to promote the use of EDI for Intrastat. The current programme extends for five years from 1994 with a review after two years. C&E is using the EDICOM programme to develop and promote Intrastat EDI in the UK.

### The future ....

In the hiatus of preparation for the introduction of the Single Market, the method of complying with the requirement to render Intrastat returns was not uppermost in the traders' priorities.

Therefore it received less attention than it might have done. The trader population using EDI to render monthly Intrastat declarations has stabilized at around 1,500 with no indication that it will expand significantly but it is T&SO's aim to increase the number of traders using EDI.

We have therefore considered recent studies which have identified reasons why traders continue to use paper as the medium for submitting Intrastat returns. Intrastat returns draw on data from different areas of the business. Many still rely on Customs agents to compile the information required for Customs purposes and some Intrastat movements. Thus traders have logistical issues to resolve before information system requirements can be addressed. There is a cost to traders in developing EDI systems and in the main, it is uneconomic to do this for Intrastat alone. The plethora of Intrastat software packages available undoubtedly confuses some traders. T&SO is trying to make it easier for traders to use EDI through a number of initiatives.

- help with setting up systems and testing transmissions
- development and provision of EDIFACT conversion software

- exploring direct or public service links between traders and EDCS as an alternative to VANS
- evaluating and approving software packages produced for Intrastat use
- considering the issue of free disks to indirect EDI users

Direct or true EDI is favoured over indirect, but even indirect EDI gives considerable benefits over receiving Intrastat data on paper. Plans are being developed to carry these initiatives forward. If Intrastat or Customs requirements alone are insufficient to persuade most traders to invest in EDI, would the addition of other UK government statistical requirements change the position?



## GSS - General

John Major has written to the GSS congratulating them on the 25th publication of "Social Trends"

### Letter from the Prime Minister

*I would like to congratulate the Central Statistical Office and Government Statistical Service on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee edition of Social Trends.*

*Over the last 25 years, Social Trends has become indispensable and has established itself as the most authoritative source of statistical information about virtually every aspect of life in this country. It is greatly valued by a wide audience, from schoolchildren to academics, from journalists to politicians.*

*As the Government has set out in the White Paper on Open Government, reliable social and economic statistics are fundamental to the Citizen's Charter and to open government. It is the responsibility of Government to provide them and to maintain public confidence in them. Social Trends epitomises this approach to official statistics. I wish it well for the next 25 years.*

### "Au revoir, Bill McLennan"

Most people in the UK statistical community must, by now, be aware that Bill McLennan, Director of the CSO and Head of the GSS, will be leaving at the end of March 1994 to take up the post of Head of the Australian Bureau of Statistics. In fact, many readers of the "serious" papers also know about Bill's departure as it was reported in all the major broadsheets, accompanied by comments such as "...the bouncy Australian.....is looking forward to spending more time on the golf course". This is not only an indication of the good relationship that Bill has built up with the press, but also a sign that there is increased popular interest in government statistics.

The GSS, in particular the CSO, has seen major developments under Bill's stewardship. These were discussed recently at the RSS Conference where Bill presented his view of the recent past and his vision for the future of the GSS.

Perhaps one of the more subtle effects of Bill's leadership has been an increased confidence amongst government statisticians, and a realisation that it's OK for statisticians to brief the press and to go out and actively work to get our statistics used. The recent public debate about government statistics, prompted by a series of articles in the Independent, must be healthy.

One of Bill's greatest regrets about his time in the UK was that he wasn't able to see through a merger between CSO and OPCS. However, the recent announcement that the two organisations are to be co-located, and that the possibility of a merger is being seriously appraised, must surely bring him some satisfaction. We wish him every success and happiness in Canberra and many of us hope to meet up with him again in the international statistical arena or perhaps whilst on secondment to the ABS!

### 'In-touch with the GSS' seminars



In October and November 1994, the Central Statistical Office organised its first two seminars in the new "In-touch with the GSS" series. The series is aimed at informing GSS staff of key developments and allowing for the discussion of important issues which affect the GSS and government statisticians.

Open Government and Marketing Statistics were the topics chosen for the opening seminars which were hosted by the Ministry of Defence and Employment



Department respectively. Each lasted ninety minutes and consisted of talks from invited speakers and time for questions and answers. In total, nearly two hundred people attended the two seminars.

The series continued in January 1995 when the topic of Meeting Customers' Needs was discussed at MAFF headquarters in London. The next seminar was due to take place in March with a half-day on European issues, hosted by CSO.

*Further information is available from the organiser:*

Darren Short on 0171-217 4339

### **GSS Assistant Statisticians conference**

Over 200 assistant statisticians from around the GSS and Northern Ireland departments congregated for a one-day conference in London last December. The aim of the day was to discuss issues affecting today's Government Statistical Service and Civil Service, and look at some applications of statistics in the media, commercial and government worlds. It also provided an opportunity to catch up with colleagues from around the country, and network in earnest!

Key speeches on the day came from Bill McLennan, departing Head of the GSS, Ruth Lea, Economics Editor at ITN, and Helen Quigley from the Association of Metropolitan Authorities. Bill spoke about the shift in attitude in recent years towards an acceptance that official statistics are produced not only for government but also for business and the public. He highlighted some GSS-wide developments such as the standardisation of release practices, the "Annual Guide to the GSS" and the GSS Code of Practice, and encouraged the audience to address the issues of regional statistics, European links and dissemination.

Ruth Lea followed by giving an insider's view of how official statistics affect the financial markets. She has seen both sides of this process, both as a government statistician and as an economist in the City. She stressed the importance of the "accuracy and trustworthiness" of official statistics, and agreed with Bill that there was a need for wider dissemination and better presentation of statistics.

As a user of GSS statistics, Helen Quigley stirred the audience up by saying she hadn't even heard of the GSS

until two years ago! She stressed the need for more communication between the GSS and its customers and more analysis of data done by the GSS. She also welcomed the Code of Practice and the GSS Mission Statement.

A number of smaller workshops for the delegates covered a range of topics; from the government statistician recruitment process, promotion prospects, international links through to betting statistics!

If any readers of Statistical News would like to lead a workshop at the next conference, in December 1995, the organising committee would like to hear from you.

*Please contact:*

Tom Marlow on 0171 276 0797

### **Electronic dissemination conference**

The GSS Electronic Dissemination conference held on 18



October 1994 at the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre in London was generally held to be a great success. Over 100 delegates attended to hear speakers from the GSS and the private sector on a range of topics, and to visit the dozen or so stands in the exhibition area.

When opening the conference Bill McLennan praised the projects that were on show and encouraged departments to continue sharing their experiences in technological developments.

There was something of interest in all of the speaker sessions, but there were undoubtedly two star features. First was the presentation by MAFF of their Economics and Statistics Group Reference Database which is made available to policy advisers via standard PC software and the Ministry's MAIDEN office systems network. The demon-



stration evoked such a level of interest from departments that MAFF agreed to mount further seminars in December at which the software will be offered free of charge to departments. In return, departments will be expected to share any developments they are able to make to the software together with any datasets of common interest. MAFF's generous offer can pave the way for a de facto GSS dissemination standard, and is an outstanding example of the benefits of GSS cooperation.

The second star turn was CCTA's presentation on Information Superhighways and the Internet. It covered the truly global nature of the "infobahn" including its uses for education, entertainment and commerce. CCTA have established an Internet information server on which they have already provided such information as the Citizen's Charter and the Open Government code of practice, and there are plans to expand the service fairly rapidly. Examples were given of publicly available official statistics from the United States, obviously stimulating some delegates to consider how their own data could be similarly distributed.

Delegates were fulsome in their praise of the conference's value, and thought that more GSS events should be arranged. Many thought that electronic dissemination was such a rapidly developing topic that an annual conference was appropriate.

*Contact:*

Carl Davis on 01633 812028

### **GSS senior staff conference**

Twenty-eight senior statisticians from around the departments got together just before Christmas at the annual GSS Senior Staff Conference. The 1994 conference focused on the outlook for government statistics in the light of the many changes going on in the wider civil service.

One key element of the changing environment is the Civil Service White Paper, which set out further plans for management reform, with the aim of improving standards across the public service and delivering better value for money for the taxpayer. A second key element is the Citizen's Charter and the follow up initiative on Open Government, which outline an important role for statistics - providing a picture of society and a window on the work of government.

The conference resulted in a number of decisions. Many related to recruitment and development policies. But perhaps the major decision was to explore setting up a GSS Advisory Committee, to advise the Head of the GSS on the service provided by the GSS to users outside central government. There are already many specialist advisory committees and user groups which provide those outside government with an opportunity to shape statistical developments (for example, the Retail Prices Index Advisory Committee), but to date the GSS has not had an advisory committee which can provide an overview of government statistics.

*For more information on the conference, please contact:*

Nigel Edison,  
Central Statistical Office,  
Telephone 0171 217 4865.

**Central Statistical Office**



### **RPI treatment of owner occupiers' housing costs and car prices - RPI advisory committee recommendations to the Chancellor**

The RPI Advisory Committee submitted its final reports, containing recommendations on the treatment of owner occupiers' housing costs and cars in the RPI, to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Kenneth Clarke, on 15 December 1994. He has accepted them for implementation by the CSO in the index for February 1995 (to be published in March).

*The main recommendations on housing were:*

- mortgage interest payments should continue to be included
- a wider range of mortgage types should be covered
- the effects of "over mortgaging" (borrowing more than is needed to finance shelter) should be removed more completely from interest payments
- owner occupiers' shelter costs should also include depreciation, with a house prices index used to measure price changes.



The Committee recommended no fundamental changes to the methodology on car prices.

The full reports were published as Command Papers, Cm 2717 on owner occupiers' housing costs and Cm 2716 on cars, and are available from HMSO and agents, price £10.65 and £5.60 respectively.

*The current Committee's terms of reference were:*

“ To advise the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the implication for the RPI of the abolition of the community charge and its replacement by the council tax; to review progress on implementing the Committee's previous recommendation on the inclusion in the index of expenditure on holidays; and to review the present treatment in the index of owner-occupiers' housing costs and new cars. In framing its recommendations the Committee is asked to take account of the practices in other European Community countries. ”

*The members of the RPI Advisory Committee 1992-4 were:*

**Chairman**     **Mr Bill McLennan**  
(Director of the Central Statistical Office and Head of the Government Statistical Service)

**Members**     **Mr John Astin**  
(Statistical Office of the European Communities, Luxembourg)

**Sir Samuel Brittan**  
(The Financial Times)

**Mr Julian R Calder**  
(Central Statistical Office)  
from July 1994

**Professor David Currie**  
(London Business School)

**Professor Michael C Fleming**  
(Loughborough University)

**Mr Kenneth H B Frere**  
(nominated by the National Federation of Consumer Groups)

**Mr S G Brian Henry**  
(Bank of England) - to April 1993

**Mr Tom Hoyes**  
(nominated by Age Concern)

**Mr John Hughes**  
(nominated by the National Consumer Council)

**Mr David Lea, OBE**  
(nominated by the Trades Union Congress)

**Miss Ruth Lea**  
(Economics Editor ITN)

**Dr Rita J Maurice**  
(Statistical consultant)

**Mr Colin Mowl**  
(H M Treasury)

**Dr John Muellbauer**  
(Nuffield College, Oxford)

**Professor John F Pickering**  
(University of Portsmouth)

**Mr Lionel D D Price**  
(Bank of England)  
from May 1993

**Professor D Garel Rhys, OBE**  
(Cardiff Business School)

**Mrs Bridget Rosewell**  
(Business Strategies Ltd)

**Dr Penelope Rowlatt**  
(National Economic Research Associates)

**Dr Andrew Sentance**  
(nominated by the Confederation of British Industry)

**Professor Ralph Turvey**  
(London School of Economics)

**Mr Reg Ward**  
(Central Statistical Office)  
to April 1994



Secretary **Mrs Marta F Haworth**  
(Central Statistical Office)  
from June 1993  
**Mr Don J Sellwood**  
(Central Statistical Office)  
to April 1993

Assistant Secretary **Mrs Margaret Dolling**  
(Central Statistical Office)

### **The System of National Accounts (SNA) 1993**

The United Kingdom's National Accounts are at present generally compiled in accordance with the recommendations of the 1968 SNA published by the United Nations.

Five international organisations - the Commission of the European Communities, the International Monetary Fund, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the United Nations and the World Bank have collaborated on the preparation of a revised system of national accounts - the 1993 SNA. The European System of Accounts (ESA) which will be used by member states to provide national accounts data to the Statistical Office of the European Communities will be consistent with the 1993 SNA.

The 1993 SNA introduces new concepts and terminology which have implications for measurement and presentation of the UK national accounts. A small team was established in the CSO under Shirley Carter, former head of the CSO's National Accounts and Economic Assessment Branch, to report on the implementation of the new international guidelines in the UK accounts.

The report of the team, together with associated documentation, is available from the CSO for £12.99.

*Requests for copies, containing cheques made payable to the Central Statistical Office, should be sent to:*

The Librarian  
Central Statistical Office  
Government Buildings  
Cardiff Road  
NEWPORT  
Gwent NP9 IXG  
Tel: 01633 812973

### **The Defence Analytical Services Agency's Annual General Meeting**

DASA became a Defence Support Agency on 1 July 1992, having evolved out of the old Defence Statistics organisation, with branches across the country. During the time up to the end of 1994 there had never been an opportunity for all 100 or so of us to meet at the same time. It was against this background that we decided to organise the first AGM.

The AGM took place in Northumberland House, Whitehall with presentations from 10 separate sections, the presentations being made by members of the sections other than the statisticians.

The emphasis on the speeches was how the service to our customers had improved. For example, the section dealing with RAF manpower showed how they had moved away from giving customers small typed tables of figures to presenting glossy reports with graphs and coloured tables with commentaries. The surveys unit illustrated how they would operate ETHOS, a system by which every person in the armed services would be sent a questionnaire, asking details of ethnic origin, and how they would process the 250,000+ replies and set up a database to maintain it! There was also an amusing presentation by a young man, who had only been in DASA two weeks, about his first impressions of the agency and the Ministry of Defence in general.

The whole event lasted just over an hour and a half and all who attended were both informed and entertained. The only drawback with the day being that none of our customers were there. If they had been, they would have been very impressed by the diversity of the work we do, from manpower planning for the three services, through to work on price indexes, and one off analytical projects and our use of information technology. Our management board thought the venture so successful they insisted that another one be organised for next year.



It wasn't all high powered presentations however, after the AGM we all posed for a group photograph and then had a glass or two of sherry, courtesy of the management board. I would encourage all members of similar organisations to have an AGM as you will learn so much more about your organisation and meet people that you normally only hear on the phone!

## Employment



### How exactly is unemployment measured ?

Statisticians at the Employment Department have produced a booklet that explains how they measure unemployment. It explains how they produce the monthly claimant count and the internationally standard ILO measure of unemployment. It points out the advantages and disadvantages of both measures and compares the figures produced by them.

*Contact:*

Kevin Argue 0171 273 6099

### Health and Safety in service industries

In June 1995, a report on health and safety in service industries will be published. The Health and Safety Executives and local authorities enforce the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and regulations made under it. Local authorities have responsibility for the enforcement of health and safety legislation in around 1¼ million premises. These include offices, shops, retail and wholesale outlets, hotel and catering establishments, residential care homes and premises in the leisure industry.

The report gives details of occupational injuries occurring during 1993/994 in local authority enforced premises. It shows that the rate of serious injury has remained constant since 1986/1987. However, injury rates referring to those injuries involving more than three days absence from normal work have risen substantially.

*Contact:*

Tracie Kilbey 0151 951 4608

## The Labour Force Survey

The Employment Department published the full results from the Autumn (September to November) 1994 Labour Force Survey (LFS) on the 8th March. They will publish key results from the Winter (December to February) 1994/95 Survey in April in the LFS Rapid Release.

They included data on weekly and hourly earnings in the December 1994 LFS Quarterly Bulletin for the first time. Figures on other income, for example, amount of state benefits received, are also available through Quantime Ltd.

*Contact:*

The LFS Help-line 0171 273 5585

### Patterns of pay (The 1994 New Earnings Survey).

The results of the 1994 New Earnings Survey were published by HMSO for the Employment Department. The survey found that the average weekly pay of full-time employees in Great Britain was £326, although 10% of employees earned less than £158 per week. Average weekly pay for women was just over 72% of that for men.

*Contact:*

Roger Sefton on 01928 79 4900

### Apprentices and other long-term trainees.

The February edition of the Employment Gazette included a statistical feature on apprentices and other long-term trainees. Using data mainly from the Labour Force Survey (LFS), it discusses current apprenticeships and compares them with the historical perspective. It includes breakdowns by industry, occupation, age, gender, region and training activity.



Apprentices in the LFS are self-identified and this leads to a very broad definition. According to the LFS, the number of apprentices has fallen sharply, from 325,000 to 216,000, since 1992. It is too soon to say whether this is a delayed effect from the recent recession or a more deep-seated change.

Contact:

Tricia Williams on 0114 259 4350

Home Office



### European sourcebook on criminal justice data

Statisticians in the Home Office are currently members of an expert group of the Council of Europe considering the feasibility of the production of a sourcebook covering criminal justice data for all member states of the Council (currently 33). Part of the work of this group has involved the production of a 'prototype' version of a sourcebook based on 12 countries and including data on crime, sentencing, prisons, surveys, manpower and costs. Following the success of this feasibility study, proposals will be considered this June by a committee of senior officials from the member states for a full publication based upon the 'prototype' model. This publication will be of particular interest to Eastern European countries and Hungary has been actively involved in the current study.

Contact:

Chris Lewis on 0171-273 2842 or  
Gordon Barclay on 0181-760 2326

### Criminal Appeal Statistics - acquiring more for less

Statistics of criminal appeals collected by the Home Office record the number, type and results of appeals made in criminal matters to the Crown Court and Court of Appeal. In the past, these statistics were only published around 9 months after the end of the year to which they referred, were relatively expensive to produce and were under-utilised. Furthermore, they could not be reconciled with a parallel set of statistics on criminal appeal caseloads published by the Lord Chancellor's Department. Improvements to the data collection proc-

ess over the past year and continuing developments in 1995 should see that situation change considerably.

Already, an expensive mainframe system has been moved onto local PCs which has improved our control over the data and reduced the cost. This new data-entry system has enabled us to increase the amount of local area data available, and more easily identify specific cases for use in research studies. During the first half of 1995 we hope to begin receiving data electronically from the Crown Courts' computerised case handling and statistics system (CREST), and by early 1996 we hope to receive data from the Court of Appeal's own database in the same way.

As a result of all these changes there will be a sharp reduction in the cost of this particular data collection. The delay in publishing the statistics will have also been sharply reduced, with 1996 data expected to be available within 3 months of the year's end. There will also be a marked improvement in the consistency of the data with detailed statistics published by the Home Office derived from the same source as those produced for the Lord Chancellor's Department. In short, we are optimistic that in this small area of criminal justice statistics it will have been possible to acquire 'more for less' with no corresponding loss of quality. With a Criminal Appeals Bill currently being put forward, these developments seem particularly timely.

Contact:

Jon Simmons on 0181-760 2730

OPCS

OPCS  
OFFICE OF POPULATION  
CENSUSES & SURVEYS

### Changes in OPCS data dissemination

Following a review of OPCS methods for releasing information and the contents of the Registrar General's Weekly Return of births and deaths, new arrangements were introduced for providing customers with timely information about OPCS plans and key statistics.

Since January 1995 OPCS has published a free monthly news sheet - OPCS Updates. *It is available to all customers and includes:*

- key statistics for England and Wales;



- details of publications due for release in the forthcoming month;
- guidance on the availability of local and other data, and the person to contact for further information; *and*
- news about new ventures and OPCS activities that affect OPCS's customers' business.

The Weekly Return ceased to be issued at the end of December 1994. Some weekly data on deaths are released in OPCS Updates. Customers will be notified later this year of the arrangements for obtaining weekly data on infectious diseases and other data previously released in the Weekly Return.

Replacing the Newsletter to the NHS is the OPCS Newsletter which forms the quarterly supplement to OPCS Updates and provides more detailed information about OPCS products to a wide range of customers.

OPCS will continue to produce the series of regular Monitors.

*For further information about OPCS Updates and Newsletter contact:*

Robert Dececco,  
Marketing Division  
Tel 0171 396 2000

### **New product: Disk versions of 1993 based sub-national population projections for England.**

The 3.5 inch disks are available on both Lotus WK1 and comma Separated Variable or Delimited (CSV) spreadsheet format. A software package such as Lotus 123, Supercalc, Symphony, Quattropro, or Excel will be needed to read WK1 files. *The information contained on each of the two disks is as follows:*

#### **Disk SP93 (1).**

1993 based sub-national population projections for England. Local Authorities (standard regions, counties, metropolitan areas and districts and London boroughs) by sex and 5 year age groups for the years 1993-2001, 2006, 2011 and 2016.

#### **Disk SP93 (2)**

1993 based sub-national population projections for England. Regional and District Health authorities by sex and 5 year age groups for the years 1993-2001, 2006, 2011 and 2016.

*For further information and price details please contact:*

Sub-national Projections and  
Demography Unit  
OPCS Room 242,  
St Catherine's House  
10 Kingsway  
LONDON WC2B 6JP  
Tel: 0171 396 2101/2180

### **NHS Survey Advice Centre**



**Eileen Goddard (Director of the Health Survey Advice Centre)**

The Social Survey Division of OPCS has won a Department of Health contract to set up and operate a Health Survey Advice Centre for the NHS in England.

The Centre's main task is to help local NHS authorities obtain maximum value from using local health and lifestyle surveys to monitor

changes in health, identify health needs, and access the effectiveness of health initiatives. In so doing, it will encourage the use of standardised methods to aid consistency and comparability with other local and national data sources.

The Centre, which began work in October 1994, will provide a range of survey and statistical advice services, to be developed in consultation with users, *and will include:*

- information about other relevant survey research, and referrals to others working on similar topics;
- advice on survey questions for monitoring progress



towards "Health of the Nation" targets, for providing other health and lifestyle indicators, and for deriving demographic classifications;

- advice on survey methods.

The Centre is staffed by experienced OPCS social survey professionals, working closely with OPC health statisticians and epidemiologists at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

*For further information contact:*

Eileen Goddard (Director of the Centre)  
on 0171 396 2058.

## Department of Social Security



### Households Below Average Income

HBAI received a very public unsolicited compliment from Professor Atkinson of Oxford University, the well-known expert on income distributions and poverty statistics. Prompted by an appeal by "The Independent" for readers' experiences of official statistics he wrote to the paper on 30 December as follows:

"... the recently developed series on *Households Below Average Income* ... has considerably improved our knowledge about the situation of people living on low incomes. This was brought about in part because the Analytical Services Division of the Department of Social Security initiated consultations with academics and other researchers. This provides a model which could be followed in other developments."

With public confidence in official statistics being a topic of great interest at the moment it is good to see such efforts recognised. It also highlights one aspect of best practice in gaining that confidence - the involvement of experts and potential customers from outside the GSS in the development of new series.

*Anyone wanting further information on HBAI can contact:*

Nick Adkin on 0171-962 8232

## Treasury



### Civil Service numbers continue to fall

As departments continue to reduce in staffing levels, the number of Civil Servants has fallen by almost 21,000 in 12 months. By 1 April 1994, there were just 533,350 permanent staff in post - the lowest for 55 years.

The figures are extracted from the 1994 edition of the Treasury's 'Civil Service Statistics' booklet, which was published in November 1994. It gives a broad statistical picture of staffing in the Civil Service and provides comparisons with previous years. It also contains a series of tables showing the numbers of Civil Servants, where they work, how they are organised, recruitment and turnover trends, and information about grading and structure.

'Civil Service Statistics 1994 Edition'.

ISBN 0 11 560062 0

Available from HMSO. Price £11.30.

A summary handout, 'Key Figures on Civil Service Staffing'.

Available free from HM Treasury.

*Contact:*

Derek Coggle,  
Room 215,  
Allington Towers,  
19 Allington Street,  
LONDON SW1E 5EB;  
STD/GTN (0171) 270 1706

### Treasury Occasional Paper on Civil Service Staffing

Treasury Occasional Paper No 1 Civil Service Staffing 1979 to 1994, was published in October 1994. Occasional Papers are based on internal working papers and are written to inform policy discussions. They are released as part of the Open Government initiative. Paper No 1 contains an analysis of Civil Service staff numbers since 1979, showing how the type of employment within the Civil Service has changed (in particular,



casual and part-time employment) and examines movements in the age structure and gender breakdown of the Civil Service. An annex gives more detailed information about the main departments. *The paper is available from:*

H M Treasury Publishing Unit,  
53a/4 Treasury Chambers,  
Parliament Street,  
London SW1P 3AG  
(telephone 0171 270 4558) price £2.50.

**Welsh Office**

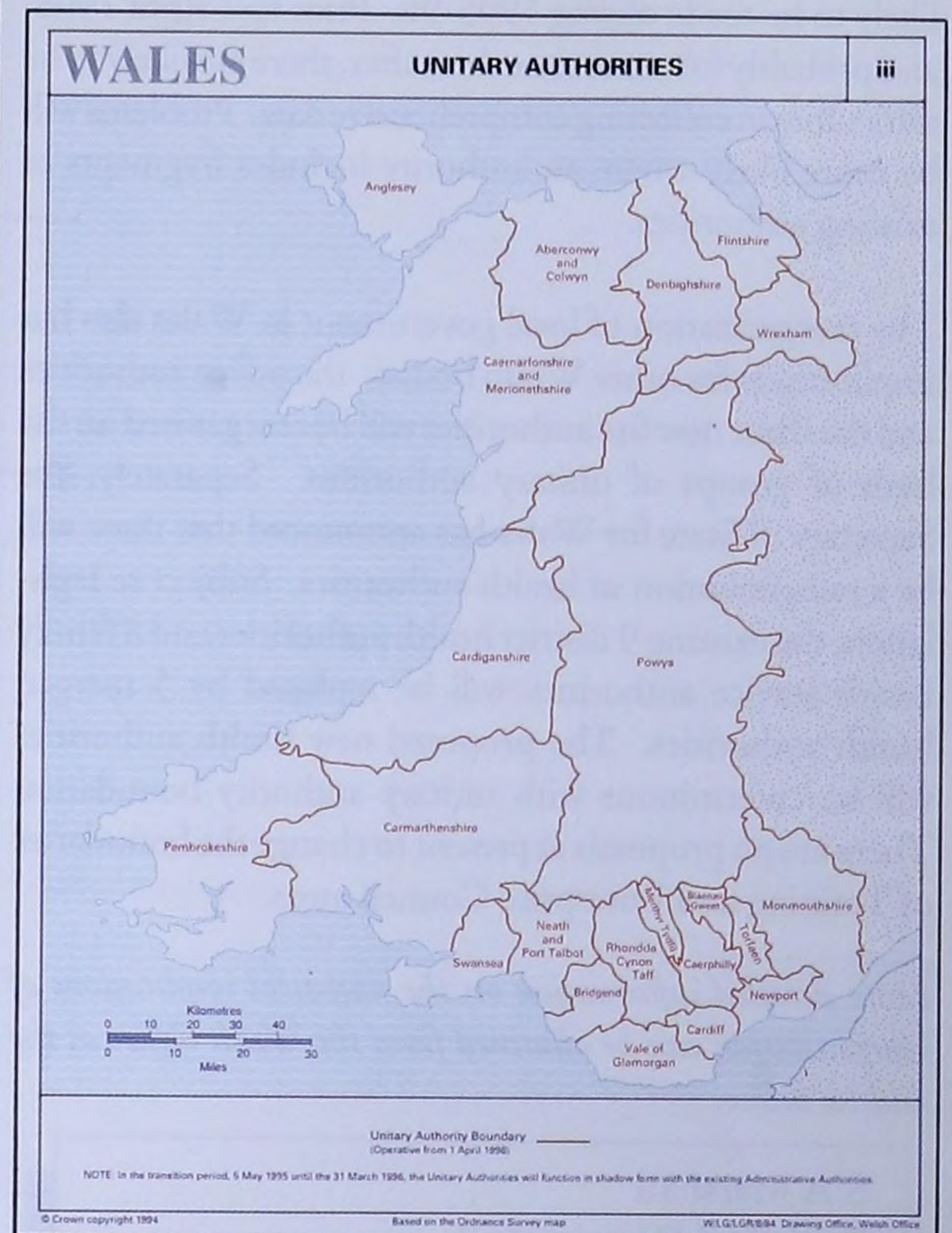


### Welsh Local Government reorganisation

From 1 April 1996, the 8 county councils and 37 district councils in Wales will be replaced by 22 all purpose or "unitary" authorities (under the Local Government (Wales) Act 1994). Unlike the reorganisation in England, all principal areas are being replaced in one fell swoop. This could have major implications for organisations that collect Welsh statistics and those that use Welsh statistics.

The basic building blocks for the new authorities are the existing communities, which are untouched by reorganisation. In most cases present districts are taken whole into unitary authorities, but six districts are split between two or more unitary authorities. This produces ten new authorities which are coterminous with current districts and twelve that are not. In only three cases are district electoral wards split, in each case between two unitary authorities.

In some circumstances statistics may be required at a higher level of aggregation than that of unitary authority, but below that of all Wales. The Act makes provision for eight preserved counties. These generally mirror the present counties, but some have adjustments at the community level to make them coterminous with the new unitary boundaries. However, in two cases the preserved county boundaries bisect the new authorities. The preserved counties are simply areas of geographic convenience required for certain non local government organisations and institutions. The preserved counties do not provide a suitable intermediate level of aggregation for statistics. At least in the short term, an alternative grouping of unitary authorities will be required for statistical purposes.



The new unitary authorities will be designated as either "counties" or "county boroughs". When dealing with Welsh data care must be taken that these are not confused with either the existing counties or the preserved counties.

Local government reorganisation impacts on the collection of statistics in a number of ways. The number of data sources will decrease in the case of existing district data, but in most cases will increase markedly for existing county data. Each unitary authority will not necessarily carry out all aspects of all existing county functions. In some areas functions, or aspects of functions, may be performed by a 'lead' authority acting on behalf of a group of authorities. In these cases where there will be less of an increase in the number of data sources. Decisions in areas where functions may be carried out by lead authorities will be made during 1995-96.

Where data are collected on a sample basis the sample frame and sample size will need to be reviewed. This is particularly true for data currently collected at a county level.

Following council elections in May 1995, the unitary authorities will exist in shadow form until 1 April 1996. Hence, requests for statistics on a unitary authority basis are



likely to be made during 1995-96. Prior to 1 April 1996, and probably for some time thereafter, there are likely to be difficulties in collecting comprehensive data. Problems will be more likely where an authority includes fragments of existing authorities.

The reorganisation of local government in Wales also has implications for other Welsh bodies. The police authorities and the three new fire authorities will be reorganised on the basis of groups of unitary authorities. Separately, the Secretary of State for Wales has announced that there will be a reorganisation of health authorities. Subject to legislation, the existing 9 district health authorities and 8 family health service authorities will be replaced by 5 merged health authorities. The proposed new health authorities will be coterminous with unitary authority boundaries. There are no proposals at present to change the boundaries of Training and Enterprise Council areas.

*More detailed information on the statistical implications of reorganisation can be obtained from the Welsh Office at the address below.*

S A Marshall  
Statistical Directorate 2  
Welsh Office  
Crown Buildings  
Cathays Park  
Cardiff  
CF1 3NQ  
Tel: 01222 823990 GTN 1208 3990

**The Scottish Office**



### **Input-output project**

Since the publication of the Scottish input-output tables for 1989, in August 1994, the Economics & Statistics Unit of the Scottish Office Industry Department has been involved in producing social accounting matrices which extend the input-output model to take into account household income and expenditure effects, impacts on occupational groups, and environmental/economic interactions. In addition, output, income and employment multipliers which measure the direct, indirect and included effects of a change in final demand from the Scottish economy have been derived.

*Contact:*

Jill Alexander 0141 242 5459

### **Accident numbers vary by season In Scotland**

There were more accidents of all severities at the peak time of day (4 to 6pm) in summer than in winter in Scotland over the years 1989 to 1993, while for fatal and serious accidents there were more in winter than summer. The latter arises from the high proportion of pedestrian accidents in November and December. The number of pedestrians killed in November between 4 to 8pm were particularly high, double the average for the whole year, while the number in January and February, with similar light and weather conditions, was only slightly above the average for the whole year.

At the morning peak 8 to 9am accidents at all levels of severity were much higher in winter and spring/autumn months than in summer months. During the winter 12 per cent of accidents in Scotland occurred on roads with snow, frost or ice, and during the morning peak 8 to 9am 24 per cent of accidents occurred in such conditions over the years 1989 to 1993.

These statistics on accidents by time, season and road condition are part of a detailed commentary in Road Accidents Scotland 1993 published in December by The Scottish Office.

Other new topics covered in the latest edition include Regional accident rates based on 4 measures - population, road length, vehicles, and traffic.

*Copies, priced £8 are available from:*

The Scottish Office Library  
Tel (0131) 244 4806

*Contact:*

Peter Duncan 0131 244 4992



## Northern Ireland

### A hot start to the new year

A fire broke out in Parliament Buildings, Belfast, over the New Year severely damaging the debating Chamber and causing smoke damage to a number of offices. This led to a lot of disruption and a rapid change of headquarters for Statistics & Social Division.

*The Head of Division, Mr Edgar Jardine, and the following branches are now working from:*

2nd Floor  
The Arches Centre  
11-13 Bloomsfield Avenue  
BELFAST BT5 5AA

<b>Mr Edgar Jardine</b>	01232 526093
<b>Dr Norman Caven</b>	01232 526093
<b>Economic Statistics &amp; Briefing Branch</b>	01232 526925
<b>Public Expenditure Branch</b>	01232 526083
<b>Census Office</b>	01232 526087
<b>Fax</b>	01232 526948

*Employment Equality Branch has moved to:*

Rosepark House  
Upper Newtownards Road  
BELFAST BT4 3SF  
Tel: 01232 526418

For all the above numbers the GTN is: 440 plus the last 5 digits.



## Other Organisations

### Bank of England: Inflation Report

The November Inflation Report provided a detailed analysis of recent monetary, price and cost developments in the UK economy and offered the Bank of England's analysis of future inflation prospects. There were signs that the strong rise in producer input prices seen earlier in 1994 had begun to feed through to output prices. Despite this, inflation on the Government's target (RPIX) measure was 2.0% in September, down from 2.4% in June; the Bank's RPIY measure of underlying inflation (which excludes the effect of indirect taxes) fell to 1.2%. Output had continued to grow at above its long-term potential rate and unemployment had continued to fall.

### Bank of England: Quarterly Bulletin

In addition to regular articles providing commentaries on the operation of UK monetary policy, and developments in the world economy and in financial markets, the November issue of the Bank's Quarterly Bulletin contained the following items:

#### Regional differences and their importance for the UK economy

This article looked at longer-term trends in the performance of the UK regions and at the short-term outlook. Its analysis of the last 20 years revealed that differences in region's average income per head have in general been persistent, and that the range of regional growth rates has tended to widen in a recession. Labour mobility between regions seems relatively low. Over the shorter term, it found that the recovery currently seemed well-balanced among the regions.

#### Regulating investment business in the Single Market

The article (by Professor Richard Dale) examined the regulatory framework for investment business put in place by the Capital Adequacy and other directives, focusing on the attempt to establish a level playing-field for banking and other financial institutions.

#### The developing Single Market in financial services

The article summarised the views, outlined in discussions with the bank, of a range of financial sector firms on the development to date of the Single Market in that sector.

#### The net debt of the public sector: end-March 1994

The article analysed developments affecting the national debt and the public sector position during the last fiscal year. As a share of GDP, the public sector's net debt had risen by 5.4 percentage points to 38.4%; general government consolidated gross debt (on a Maastricht basis) rose by 5.9 percentage points to 48.4%.

#### The external balance sheet of the United Kingdom: recent developments

The article analysed changes to UK net external assets during 1993, focusing on changes in the pattern of capital flows and the impact of revaluations.



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**Department of Social Security (Newcastle)**

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151 Buckingham Palace Road  
LONDON SW1W 9SS

**Department of Trade and Industry**

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43 Marsham Street  
LONDON SW1P 3E8

**Department of Transport**

Nadim Ahmed  
Room 88/4  
HMT  
Parliament Street  
LONDON SW1P 3AG

**Her Majesty's Treasury**

Paul Cronin  
Room 2-004  
Cathays Park  
CARDIFF CF1 3NQ

**Welsh Office**



# Articles in recent issues of Statistical News

## No 99 Winter 1992

Official pay and earnings in Great Britain  
Family resource survey

Mike Janes and Alan Spence  
Sharon Blackburn and  
Sue Lincoln

## NO 100 Spring 1993 - International Edition

Introduction  
Official statistics: The international dimension seen from the CSO  
ODA assistance to statistical services in developing countries  
A day in the life of an ODA statistician in Africa  
Sharing GSS 'know how' with Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union  
UK - Hungary workshop: November 1992 looking to the future  
Statistics and developing countries - reflections approaching retirement

Bill McLennan  
Alwyn Pritchard  
Tony Williams  
Richard Butchart  
Jenny Church  
Jenny Church  
Dick Allen

## No 101 Summer 1993

The 1991 survey of origins, destinations and transport of UK  
International trade  
CSO's First Release makes its debut  
The 1992 Statistics Users' Conference. The CSO-economic and  
business statistics into the 1990's

Mike Collop  
Jeremy Grove  
Ian Scott

Measuring traffic speeds in London  
Households below average income

Paul Cook / Martin Duckworth  
Mike Prestwood / Debra Richards  
Neil Benn  
Nick Adkin / Martin Uglow

## No 102 Autumn 1993

A survey of the Welsh language: The 1992 Welsh Social Survey  
Minimising the form-filling burden-CSO's 'Quinquennial Reviews'  
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The legal framework of European Community Statistics  
A good press For European Statistics  
How not to collect fire statistics from fire brigades

Howell Jones

David Blunt  
Yves Franchet  
John Wright  
Gillian A M Goddard

## No 103 Winter 1993/94

OPCS sponsors International Conference for users of BLAISE,  
the Computer Aided Interviewing Package  
Projections of the prison populations of England and Wales  
Performance Indicators for the Police Service  
Tackling a quality project

Tony Manners  
Jackie Orme  
Lawrence Davidoff  
Paul Vickers and Justin Vetta

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Dissemination and marketing strategy of the Labour Force Survey  
Survey of public attitudes to the environment 1993  
The Gambia Hepatitis Intervention Study (GHIS)  
Census Validation Surveys - design Issues raised by international comparisons

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John Custance / Tom Marlow  
Nick Maine  
Patrick Heady

## NO 105 Summer 1994

The organisation of statistics in the member countries of the  
European Community  
Gross National Product - Its role in funding the EC and the impact  
of the 4th Resource on the CSO  
Passing the TES(t): Training of European Statisticians  
The Stagiare Scheme

Georges Als

Ian Cope  
Darren Short  
Andrew Roy

## NO 106 Autumn 1994

How exactly is unemployment measured?  
The 1991 London Area Transport Survey  
The Family Expenditure Survey: Some recent developments  
Preparing undergraduates for careers in the Government  
Statistical Service: A view from the inside

James Denman  
Phil Mongredien  
John King

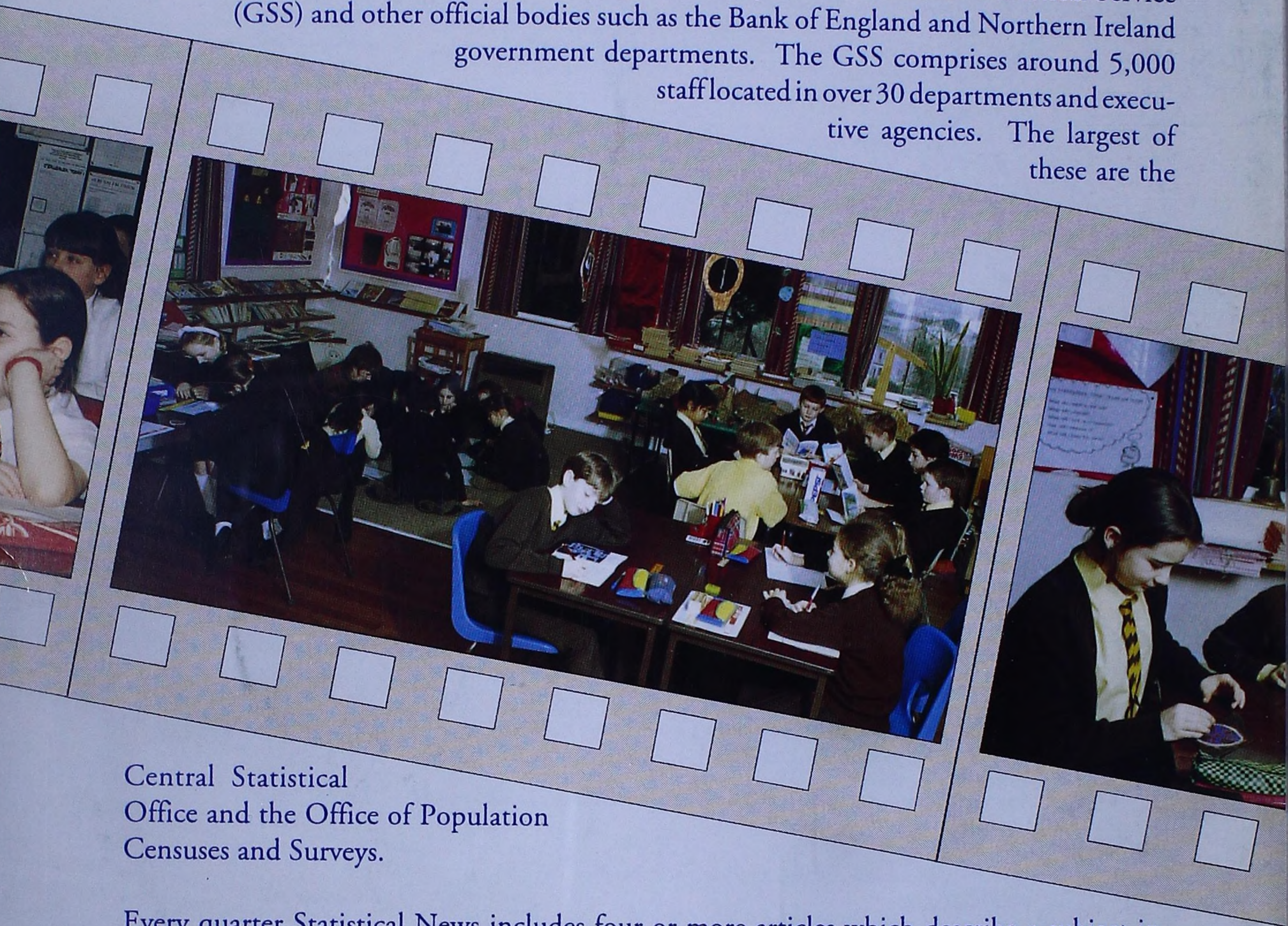
Darren Short

Copies of the above and earlier articles may be obtained from: Central Statistical Office, Government Buildings, Cardiff Road, Newport, Gwent NP9 1XG, Library Room 1.001. The cost is £5 a copy, inclusive of postage and handling, for the articles listed, and for articles from earlier issues. The appropriate remittance should accompany each order. Cheques, etc., should be made payable to 'The Central Statistical Office'.



Statistical News provides a comprehensive account of new developments in British official statistics, and it is designed to help and inform all with an interest in these statistics. It is essential reading for everyone who needs to keep up-to-date with the latest in this wide-ranging and dynamic area.

Official statistics in United Kingdom are produced by the Government Statistical Service (GSS) and other official bodies such as the Bank of England and Northern Ireland government departments. The GSS comprises around 5,000 staff located in over 30 departments and executive agencies. The largest of these are the



Central Statistical  
Office and the Office of Population  
Censuses and Surveys.

Every quarter Statistical News includes four or more articles which describe a subject in depth; these subjects range from the latest surveying techniques to statisticians' projects in Zambia. The News from around the GSS and beyond section carries shorter articles from each department and associated organisation on their latest statistical ventures and plans. The Supplement of New Surveys and Departmental Publications is a reference document for all recent output and products.

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