

EXECUTIVE NOTE

DRAFT SSI: THE OFFICIAL STATISTICS (SCOTLAND) ORDER 2008

This statutory instrument will, if approved, be made in exercise of the powers conferred by section 6(1)(b)(ii) and (2) of the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 (“the 2007 Act”). It is subject to affirmative resolution procedure.

Policy Objectives

The purpose of the Order is to extend the definition of “official statistics” in the 2007 Act. A key aim of the 2007 Act was to put a framework for the assessment of official statistics for the UK “National Statistics” designation on a statutory footing.

The 2007 Act created a new non-ministerial department, the Statistics Board to carry out that assessment. Further, the Board has an objective of promoting and safeguarding the production and publication of official statistics that serve the public good.

The 2007 Act sets out that official statistics include those statistics produced by:

- the Statistics Board;
- any government department;
- the Scottish Administration, a Welsh Ministerial Authority or a Northern Ireland department; or
- any other person acting on behalf of the Crown.

The 2007 Act empowers Ministers to extend this definition to other bodies’ statistics i.e. non-Crown bodies.

During 2008, the Scottish Government intends to engage with public sector bodies that produce devolved statistics on Scotland to discuss whether bringing their statistics into the definition of official statistics would help improve statistical standards.

However, there is a pressing need to draw up an initial list to ensure that non-Crown bodies that currently produce National Statistics have their statistics included as official statistics. The non-Crown bodies that produce National Statistics on Scotland are:

- Common Services Agency for the Scottish Health Service
- Higher Education Statistics Agency
- Student Loans Company Ltd

This initial order will therefore ensure that the statistics produced by these three bodies are designated as official statistics, which means that they fall under the remit of the Statistics Board and that National Statistics produced by these bodies can continue as such from the start of the new system, which will commence on 1 April 2008.

In due course the Scottish Government intends to extend this list further to bring in other non-Crown bodies who wish to have their statistics included under the remit of the Statistics Board.

Consultation

The 2007 Act requires Ministers to consult the Statistics Board before making this Order. The Board is content with this Order and is happy that the Scottish Government intends to engage with other non-Crown bodies about the statistics they produce, with a view to bringing them within the scope of official statistics.

Those with responsibility for producing statistics within the 3 non-Crown bodies, specified in this Order, have been consulted and are content to have their organisations included in this Order.

Financial Effects

The Order has no financial effects on the Scottish Government, local government or on business.

Regulatory Impact Assessment

None is required as the Order no impact on business.

Rob Wishart
Chief Statistician
Scottish Government

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