

## **UK Performance Indicators Technical Group**

Minutes of the UK Performance Indicators Technical Group (UKPITG) held at 13.00 on Thursday, 10 December 2015 at Nicholson House, Bristol and via video conference

### **Present:**

Members:	Jonathan Waller	Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) [Chair]
	Matthew Bollington	Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS)
	Suzie Dent	HESA
	Hannah Falvey	Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW)
	Jovan Luzajic	Universities UK, Universities Scotland, Higher Education Wales, GuildHE
	Michael MacNeill	Department for Education and Learning Northern Ireland (DELNI)
	Richard Puttock	Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)
	Chris Williams	Welsh Government
Secretariat:	Alison Brunt	HEFCE
	Mark Gittoes	HEFCE

### **Apologies:**

Gordon Anderson	Scottish Funding Council (SFC)
Awaiting nomination	UCAS

## **1. Welcome from the chair**

1.1 The chair welcomed members to the meeting. It was noted that the Chair would discuss matters arising within the agenda with the Scottish Funding Council as required outside of the meeting.

## **2. Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising**

2.1. The group accepted the minutes of the previous meeting as a true and accurate record of the meeting. It was noted that all actions arising from the minutes were addressed by items on the agenda for this or a future meeting.

ACTION: HESA to publish the minutes of UKPITG's July meeting on their website alongside the UK Performance Indicators and associated content.

Incorporation of HE provision in FECs and APs within UKPIs

2.2. The minutes of the previous meeting requested that representatives of the devolved nations provide a report on the processes required to facilitate incorporation and/or compatibility of HE provision registered at further education colleges with UKPIs. On account of their apologies to the meeting, JW would seek the required update from GA outside of the meeting.

2.3. Northern Ireland reported that their update was limited, and that further examination of their data collections was required. It was noted that HE in FE provision was present in Northern Ireland, but that it was not currently integrated into HE datasets.

ACTION: UKPITG members representing Northern Ireland to explore the processes required to facilitate incorporation of HE provision registered at Northern Ireland further education colleges into UKPIs, and report back to the next meeting of UKPITG.

2.4. Wales provided a written update to the meeting (attached at Annex A). Given the extended coverage of HESA data to include individual HE students at Welsh further education institutions from 2016-17 academic year onwards, and the infeasibility of using the Lifelong Learning Record Wales data, members agreed that incorporation of this provision within UKPIs should not be pursued until HESA data became available. On account of the small size of HE in FE provision in Wales, it was deemed not to be a significant omission if other nations progressed incorporation of their own HE in FE provision before Wales was ready to do the same, especially if appropriate contextualisation was included. While concerns were legitimate with regards to the quality of data in its first year of collection, it was considered that use of 2016-17 HESA data should remain the ambition, subject to appropriate data quality assessment. It was likely therefore, that HE in FE students could be incorporated into UKPIs published in 2018 or 2019, at the earliest.

ACTION: UKPITG members representing Wales to pursue the incorporation of HE provision registered at Welsh further education colleges into UKPIs on the basis of 2016-17 HESA data returns, subject to appropriate quality assessments of that data.

#### Development of TEF metrics

2.5. Members also discussed the requirement noted at the previous meeting to maintain a watching brief regarding development of the TEF, and overlaps with, or implications for, UKPIs in particular. It was noted that the Green Paper had been published and that development of the TEF was progressing. The TEF metrics would take the form of some of the existing UKPIs, with additional splits of the populations also included. While careful presentation of the TEF metrics would be required to avoid unintended implications for UKPIs, it was reported that key individuals from HEFCE and BIS were contributing advice and analysis to the development process. This included individuals drawn from the UKPISG and UKPITG, at strategic and officer level respectively.

#### Reporting of UKPRNs in PREVINST

2.6. HESA reported that data quality in terms of the PREVINST variable in 2014-15 HESA data was better than the \*J transaction had indicated: an additional UCAS lookup file had been required but only for approximately 2,500 records. It was noted that the proportion with known PREVINST data in Table T1a was 95 per cent. This was only 1 percentage point lower than in 2013-14, and the data was considered to be fit for purpose for most institutions. All but two institutions achieved a proportion with known data in Table T1a of 80 per cent or higher: similarly there were two institutions in T1b and another four in T1c who failed to reach 80 per cent with known data.

2.7. Members considered whether it was appropriate to make a recommendation to UKPISG as to suppressing the state school indicator for institutions. It was noted that the decision to suppress an institution's UKPI rest with the funding bodies for HE, and that there needed to be a consistent approach across the UK and across the three UKPI tables involved. On the basis that one of the institutions for whom known data was felt to be of particular concern was Scottish, and another English it was identified that this matter could not be concluded until GA's view could be secured.

ACTION: HESA to coordinate with the funding bodies for HE with regard to suppression of state school information in the 2016 UKPIs on the basis of high proportions of unknown previous school.

#### Proposed 2016 publication dates for UKPIs

2.8. UKPITG members had been informed of the proposed 2016 publication dates in advance of this meeting, as

- Tranche 1 – existing WP indicators for existing HEPs: Thursday 4 February
- Tranche 2 – non-continuation indicators: Wednesday 23 March
- Tranche 3 – employment indicators: Thursday 7 July

2.9. Members agreed the proposed dates, but noted some of the publications planned by DELNI in February to similar timescales and the inconvenience of the additional workload that the close timings introduced. HESA offered additional support to Northern Ireland during the period.

ACTION: UKPITG to recommend the 2016 publication dates for UKPIs to UKPISG at the earliest opportunity, in order to facilitate their announcement in accordance with Official Statistics conditions.

### **3. Update from the October meeting of the UKPISG (Oral item and minutes of that meeting)**

3.1. JW updated the group on the key points of the UKPISG business discussed in October 2015. The disaggregation of students registered at the Open University according to the country of their national centre had been agreed by UKPISG and HESA were proceeding with implementing this.

3.2. Feedback from the July 2015 "invitation to comment on future changes to the UKPIs" had highlighted a lack of visibility and awareness of the principles agreed for UKPIs. HESA had now published the principles explicitly within the UKPI governance

section on their website and acknowledged that ongoing UKPI development work may require a further improvement in the visibility of this content. Members requested that a direct link to the principles was provided within the UKPI homepage.

ACTION: HESA to introduce a direct link to the UKPI principles to the UKPI homepage of their website.

3.3. The group noted that the Government's green paper on higher education had been published. It was acknowledged that the regulatory changes proposed within the green paper had potential implications for UKPIs, and that a watching brief needed to be maintained in this regard. It was also recognised that developments in the Teaching Excellence Framework would outpace those in the UKPIs: the group felt that development of the TEF should not undermine the developments in UKPIs, but that alignment would have mutual benefit.

ACTION: UKPITG secretariat to maintain their awareness of the development of the TEF and its interactions with UKPIs.

3.4. Members were informed of UKPISG's request that the feasibility of UKPIs based on indices of multiple deprivations (IMD) be re-visited on the basis of feedback received in relation to the July 2015 "invitation to comment on future changes to the UKPIs" and the strength of feeling that a UK-wide area-based measure of disadvantage be retained. UKPITG highlighted initial concerns regarding the concept of comparing four nation-specific IMD measures, and noted that this work would need to be progressed in meetings of the group during 2016. It was noted that some nations might have already chosen to use an IMD as their nation-specific area-based measure of disadvantage.

ACTION: UKPITG secretariat to locate and circulate records of UKPITG's previous discussions on the potential use of IMD measures in UKPIs.

ACTION: Representatives of the four UK nations to consider the potential use of IMD measures in UKPIs further, in advance of the next meeting of UKPITG.

#### **4. Response rates to the 2013-14 DLHE survey: impacts of changing the suppression threshold (UKPITG 15/06)**

4.1. SD introduced the paper and highlighted the key points contained within it. Members were invited to note that the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey was largely in the field at the time of the meeting, and that the April tranche of the 2014-15 survey had already been completed. As such, the group acknowledged that decisions taken at this point in time could disadvantage institutions on the basis that there was insufficient time to communicate that decision to institutions and subsequently influence behaviours with regard to the present survey and the 2016 UKPIs.

4.2. Members noted that a requirement for UKPISG to approve any recommendation was likely to constrain timings further, and reduce the possibility of influencing behaviours in time for the 2016 UKPIs. On the basis that a decision would affect UKPI publications (rather than any other data requests HESA or their statutory customers received),

members considered that the pressing issue was the exclusion of likely biased data from the benchmarking calculations.

4.3. Members agreed that they were broadly in favour of raising the suppression thresholds in order to address implications arising from likely biases within statistics based on low response rates. It was considered that it may be feasible to move to a suppression threshold based on 90 per cent of the target DLHE response rate immediately (with an intention to move to 95 per cent in the coming years) if agreement of UKPISG could be secured by correspondence and communicated to institutions in advance of Christmas 2015.

ACTION: UKPITG to recommend an increase in the suppression thresholds used within UKPIs with regards to DLHE response rates.

ACTION: UKPITG secretariat to communicate this recommendation to UKPISG by correspondence at the earliest opportunity, in order to secure a decision in a sufficiently timely manner to allow implementation within 2016 UKPIs. HESA to communicate the outcome of that decision to institutions as necessary.

## **5. Progress to date on the development of new WP indicators (UKPITG 15/07†)**

5.1. MG introduced the paper and noted that the intention was for UKPITG to receive an update on work undertaken since the last meeting when the development work associated with the new WP UKPIs was divided across the UK nations. At this meeting UKPITG were required to make an assessment of emerging issues regarding the UK-wide comparability of data and statistics required to deliver the high priority indicators requested by UKPISG.

### Publication timings

5.2. Members were reminded of the ambition to publish WP experimental statistics in alignment with Tranche 3 of the 2016 UKPIs: the requirement to differentiate timing of the experimental statistics from the established UKPIs was very clearly directed by UKPISG. Subject to the practicalities of development and preparation, members suggested 21 July 2016 as an initial target date for publication of WP experimental statistics.

ACTION: UKPITG to monitor progress on the ambition of publishing experimental WP statistics on 21 July 2016.

5.3. HESA had summarised the production stages for UKPIs, but members agreed that the stages involved in production of experimental statistics would necessarily deviate from these. In particular, because HESA did not hold all the data that may be drawn upon to produce the statistics, collaborative production arrangements would need to be accommodated within the timescales, involving all of the home nations.

### Pre-release access to underlying data

5.4. UKPITG then discussed the limitations to their ability to share some of the data underlying the experimental statistics with institutions. Considering a legal perspective, and the data protection Act in particular, members agreed that it would be challenging to justify providing institutions with the individual level data underlying some of the experimental statistics. If the individual level data had not been provided by the institution and instead provided from alternative sources there was no basis on which the institution

could quality assure the data or subsequently impact on any quality issues identified within it. As a result, Official Statistics requirements provided no basis for allowing institutions the two week quality assurance period associated with the established UKPIs sourced entirely from the HESA student data returns.

5.5. It was recognised that the experimental statistics would need to secure buy-in and support from the sector, and that institutions might justifiably call for transparency and support from funders and Governments with regards to the progression of WP priorities. However, the legal barriers to sharing data with institutions were considered to be extremely challenging and UKPITG agreed that it was not within their collaborative remit (nor that of UKPISG) to facilitate access to individual level data for the sole purposes of developing better understanding of progression of and support for disadvantaged groups. It was acknowledged that individual member organisations may choose to do some of this and that this should be a matter for those organisations, distinctly from UKPI considerations.

5.6. UKPITG, UKPISG and their member organisations therefore had a role in providing clarity as to the limitations of institutional access to individual level data sources such as the National Pupil Database and HMRC data. Members acknowledged that a line would need to be drawn, and held, as to appropriate levels of access that could be facilitated and the purposes for which that might be possible.

5.7. UKPITG noted that the school destination measures published by the Department for Education may have set some appropriate precedents for identifying appropriate levels of access and managing expectations of those organisations involved. These measures made use of linked schools and HE data, and the processes they employed in terms of sharing data might be transferable to UKPIs.

ACTION: BIS to explore the processes employed by DfE in terms of data sharing and the school destination measures.

5.8. Members acknowledged that there would be value in institutions being able to provide a sense check of statistics relative to their own expectations, and to validate the overall population sizes included in the coverage of different measures. It was considered likely that this type of quality-related assessment would provide some basis for institutions being granted preview access to the statistics prior to publication. Subject to any guidance provided by DfE and any other legal advice, members agreed that they should seek to provide institutions with preview access to the statistics in aggregate and final form, prior to publication.

ACTION: UKPITG to recommend to UKPISG that mechanisms be explored whereby institutions are provided with quality assurance access to statistics derived from individual level sources other than those provided by the institutions themselves, in final and aggregate form (ideally allowing at least one week of access for providers).

5.9. The legal gateways for sharing HMRC data in future would present an even greater challenge: members noted that there was currently no legal gateway through which institutional access to individual level HMRC data could be facilitated. The WP

experimental statistics may therefore necessarily set a precedent for institutional expectations of access to individual level data not provided by them.

#### Updates on development of specific experimental statistics

##### Household residual income

5.10. HEFCE indicated that their analysis of linked student loans company data suggested that a statistic based on the household residual income (HRI) of entrants was feasible, including on a UK-wide basis. A number of issues were discussed by the group:

5.10.1. An indicator could be based on a marker that a student met a lower threshold of HRI or the actual HRI figure recorded in relation to that student. The latter was recognised as being of lower data quality.

5.10.2. While the lower threshold of HRI seemed applicable, the group noted that this was neither consistent across the UK (it was lower in Wales and Northern Ireland than the £25,000 in England) nor over time. There was then the question of whether the lowest threshold observed across the UK was used as the basis for the indicator, or whether comparisons were made UK-wide according to each nation's threshold. A preference for lowest threshold was expressed. It was likely that a location adjustment would be required, and the benchmark was considered the appropriate way to do this.

5.10.3. The impact of maintenance grant changes in England, particularly in relation to student behaviours and their declaration of income for means testing, would need to be monitored in order to understand the stability (or otherwise) of the resulting indicators over time.

5.10.4. Timing concerns were raised in relation to the alignment of the HESA and SLC datasets, in relation to entrants with start dates falling outside of the academic year for the SLC reporting period.

5.10.5. What assumptions do you make when the entrant has no link to the SLC data? Either because the student does not feature in SLC data on account of not accessing student support or because of a linking failure (it was considered that the latter should be fairly evenly distributed, unless there was a clear indication of wider data quality issues). It was noted that the current approach used in analysis was binary, with no concept of unknown.

5.11. Members agreed that the experimental nature of the statistics meant that some of these parameters could be tested with users within the necessary feedback channels.

ACTION: Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland to confirm the lower thresholds for HRI within their student support packages, to enable HEFCE to incorporate this information into analysis in advance of the next meeting, to be based on lowest threshold observed.

##### School-based measures

5.12. HEFCE reported that analysis in support of refinement of the state school indicators was limited to England's National Pupil Database, and as a result it was not possible to comment on the UK-wide feasibility of these statistics. It was reported that the existing UKPIs had been recreated on the basis of the linked NPD data. Refinement of

that indicator was possible through a number of the classifications available from EduBase:

- a) Enhancement of the existing state/independent school split based entirely on the school attended for Key Stage 5 and/or Key Stage 4 study.
- b) Splits by school selectivity (based on admissions policies); members noted that the admissions policies of independent schools were not reported.
- c) Alternative splits by age range, rural/urban location, unisex/all gender, religious character, special measures; members noted that these were all unlikely to go forward.

5.13. HEFCW reported that there were likely to be fewer school types in Wales than in England, but that these were not comparable with England. It was unlikely that information was collected on school admissions policies and HEFCW were awaiting confirmation on the availability of linked schools data. An alternative categorisation considered appropriate to Wales was English/Welsh medium. No measures of progression were established with regards to categorisation of Welsh schools. It was considered that refinement of the existing state school indicators via linked schools data was the only real possibility for Wales that was comparable with England, and data linking would present a challenge.

5.14. DELNI reported that there was potential for their school categorisations to align with those in England. However, at present there was no access to linked schools data to provide the refinement of Key Stage 5/Key Stage 4 school. Similarly, school performance information was available in relation to admissions policies, but not progression. DELNI were working with the Department for Education to improve data linkages, but this was not currently available.

5.15. It was concluded that there was no school-based measure that is consistent across the UK. School selectivity potentially offered the greatest feasibility – and Welsh medium schools could possibly be taken as a proxy for selective schools in Wales.

ACTION: HEFCE, HEFCW and the Welsh Government to explore the possibilities related to establishing a categorisation of Welsh schools by admissions policy.

#### Free school meals

5.16. HEFCE reported that analysis identified an individual's receipt of free school meals (FSM) as the measure with the greatest potential but noted that it was only possible to consider receipt as opposed to eligibility. The absence of the FSM concept within English independent schools was highlighted, and members acknowledged that the underlying disadvantage was still present for pupils at these schools.

ACTION: HEFCE and BIS to engage with DfE with a view to enhancing availability of FSM information at the school level.

5.17. HEFCW noted that FSM could be feasible as eligibility criteria were comparable with England and Northern Ireland (but not Scotland where eligibility criteria were known to differ).

ACTION: HEFCW to confirm whether data capture extends to both receipt and eligibility, or just to eligibility.

5.18. DELNI noted that FSM was available at school level based on pupils in receipt of FSM. However, as noted previously access to the linked schools data was not currently available and development of data sharing processes that would accommodate access to and use of this data were likely to be some way off in terms of timing (unlikely before the end of 2016).

ACTION: DELNI to keep UKPITG up to date on developments in the availability of linked schools data over the following year.

#### Area-based measures

5.19. HEFCE confirmed that England's choice of a nation-specific area-based measure of disadvantage would be the continued use of POLAR3 for young students, and potentially introducing use of the adult HE qualification rate quintiles for mature students.

5.20. HEFCW confirmed that Wales' choice was to maintain the use of POLAR3, and potentially also introduce use of the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivations or Communities First Areas.

ACTION: HEFCW to confirm use of WIMD or Communities First Areas as supplementary area-based measures of disadvantage, alongside POLAR3.

5.21. DELNI confirmed that Northern Ireland's choice was use of the Northern Ireland Index of Multiple Deprivations.

### **6. Progress to date on the review of the benchmarking approach (UKPITG 15/08†)**

6.1. JW introduced the paper and reminded members of the division of the review work across four subgroups of UKPITG. The need for the group to consider the scale of potential change identified by the review was highlighted. Members considered that in the context of the development of the TEF it would be prudent to plan on the basis of fundamental change, requiring implementation through the use of experimental statistics. On this basis, it was felt appropriate to aim (provisionally) to introduce change via experimental statistics published before the end of 2016. It was noted that a new set of benchmarks would need to be published in the form of experimental statistics for two years before being incorporated into the UKPIs.

6.2. The group proceeded to discuss the parameters that might constitute major or minor refinement to the benchmarking approach, and therefore the use of experimental statistics. By way of an example, members considered that a change to a model-based approach would equate to a major change, while adjustments to the benchmarking factor groupings would equate to a minor change. It was acknowledged that UKPITG would need to make a judgement call within this spectrum: new factors being added into the benchmarking would form a more major than minor change, as it should be having an impact to justify doing it. The size of the impact on the benchmarks calculated would be a useful measure of the scale of the change.

6.3. Members then provided updates on the four areas of review work.

#### (a) Statistical methodology

6.4. JW informed the group that he had spoken with the Executive Director of the Royal Statistical Society regarding the availability of support and potential use of their

networks. The RSS had seemed happy to help, especially with regard to the publication and distribution of an invitation to tender for the work to their professional community.

6.5. The ITT would seek a balanced view through the inclusion of a team of reviewers (rather than a single academic) as well as inclusion of the ONS' methodology unit, and would be drafted within the first two weeks of January 2016. The selection of a successful tenderer would be sought by 16 February 2016 in order to deliver review outcomes in approximately mid-march.

6.6. Members were invited to note an expected maximum cost for this strand of work of £20,000, as well as the intention to distribute this cost accordingly across the four UK nations.

ACTION: UKPITG members representing the four UK nations to consider the ability of their organisations to contribute to costs of £20,000 on the basis of the usual model.

6.7. JW informed the group that he planned to speak with the ONS' methodology unit imminently, about their potential involvement in this work. Members noted the ONS were currently providing advice to BIS in relation to some areas of TEF development and acknowledged the value in overlapping.

(b) Principles for the selection of benchmarking factors

6.8. Members were content with the approach outlined in the paper.

(c) Principles for the definition of groupings within benchmarking factors

6.9. HF updated the group, and noted the intention to progress this area of work in parallel with work under (b). The work would incorporate a desk-based literature review of methodologies used to define benchmarking groupings, and an assessment of changes made to benchmarking groupings within the UKPIs since the benchmarking approach was established. Proposals would be developed and tested, and brought to this group for further testing. Members acknowledged the opportunity to make use of the resources available in relation to work under (a) in order to test proposals further with an independent source.

(d) User engagement and consultation

6.10. A number of opportunities for engagement with stakeholders had been identified, including existing data workshop events, planning officer meetings and student records meetings, as well as internal government groups (if identifiable via central mailing lists or similar). It was acknowledged that timings could prove difficult given that meetings and events were already scheduled. Further work would consider how this topic could be added into agendas of existing events, how contributions to those events could be resourced and identification of an appropriate level of detail and complexity at which to pitch communications. Surveys were considered a potentially useful mechanism in this area and HEFCE noted that they may be able to provide some support to this type of activity.

ACTION: Review area leads to document the processes outlined in their updates, and circulate these to the secretariat at the earliest opportunity.

ACTION: Upon completion of their draft invitation to tender for work to review the benchmarking statistical methodology, HESA to circulate that draft to UKPITG members for comment and approval.

## **7. Next steps in the review of research UKPIs (UKPITG 15/09†)**

7.1. Discussion of this paper was deferred until the February 2016 meeting of the UKPITG. Given UKPISG's ambition that experimental research statistics be published before the end of 2016, members were encouraged to consider their ability to contribute fully to the discussion of this paper.

## **8. Any other technical issues related to the UK Performance Indicators (UKPITG 15/10)**

8.1. Members agreed all of the technical issues proposed within the paper.

ACTION: HESA to implement the technical changes described in paper UKPITG 15/10.

## **9. Open data licencing and the UK Performance Indicators (UKPITG 15/11)**

9.1. Members discussed the proposal to publish the UKPIs under an open data licence. The licence being recommended was being used elsewhere in HESA's published outputs, and would improve their utility in terms of onward use of the information being published. On the basis that the recommendation was in close alignment with Government policy regarding transparency and accessibility, members agreed the proposal.

ACTION: UKPITG to recommend to UKPISG that the 2016 publication of UKPIs be made available under an open data licence.

## **10. Papers proposed as exempt from immediate publication (marked with †)**

10.1. Members agreed that the papers proposed as exempt should be considered as exempt from publication on the basis that they related to ongoing reviews in development. A publication date with respect to these papers would be agreed by the UKPITG at a future meeting.

ACTION: HESA to publish the agreed non-exempt papers from this December 2015 meeting on their website alongside associated content relating to governance of the UKPIs.

## **11. Date of next meeting**

11.1. The group would next meet on Wednesday 10th February 2016.

## **12. Any other business**

12.1. There were no items of any other business.

**Meeting closed 15.10**

**Actions arising:**

Paragraph 2.1: HESA to publish the minutes of UKPITG's July meeting on their website alongside the UK Performance Indicators and associated content.

Paragraph 2.3: UKPITG members representing Northern Ireland to explore the processes required to facilitate incorporation of HE provision registered at Northern Ireland further education colleges into UKPIs, and report back to the next meeting of UKPITG.

Paragraph 2.4: UKPITG members representing Wales to pursue the incorporation of HE provision registered at Welsh further education colleges into UKPIs on the basis of 2016-17 HESA data returns, subject to appropriate quality assessments of that data.

Paragraph 2.7: HESA to coordinate with the funding bodies for HE with regard to suppression of state school information in the 2016 UKPIs on the basis of high proportions of unknown previous school.

Paragraph 2.9: UKPITG to recommend the 2016 publication dates for UKPIs to UKPISG at the earliest opportunity, in order to facilitate their announcement in accordance with Official Statistics conditions.

Paragraph 3.2: HESA to introduce a direct link to the UKPI principles to the UKPI homepage of their website.

Paragraph 3.3: UKPITG secretariat to maintain their awareness of the development of the TEF and its interactions with UKPIs.

Paragraph 3.4: UKPITG secretariat to locate and circulate records of UKPITG's previous discussions on the potential use of IMD measures in UKPIs.

Paragraph 3.4: Representatives of the four UK nations to consider the potential use of IMD measures in UKPIs further, in advance of the next meeting of UKPITG.

Paragraph 4.3: UKPITG to recommend an increase in the suppression thresholds used within UKPIs with regards to DLHE response rates.

Paragraph 4.3: UKPITG secretariat to communicate this recommendation to UKPISG by correspondence at the earliest opportunity, in order to secure a decision in a sufficiently timely manner to allow implementation within 2016 UKPIs. HESA to communicate the outcome of that decision to institutions as necessary.

Paragraph 5.2: UKPITG to monitor progress on the ambition of publishing experimental WP statistics on 21 July 2016.

Paragraph 5.7: BIS to explore the processes employed by DfE in terms of data sharing and the school destination measures.

Paragraph 5.8: UKPITG to recommend to UKPISG that mechanisms be explored whereby institutions are provided with pre-release access to statistics derived from individual level sources other than those provided by the institutions themselves, 24 hours prior to publication and in final, aggregate form.

Paragraph 5.11: Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland to confirm the lower thresholds for HRI within their student support packages, to enable HEFCE to incorporate this

information into analysis in advance of the next meeting, to be based on lowest threshold observed.

Paragraph 5.15: HEFCE, HEFCW and the Welsh Government to explore the possibilities related to establishing a categorisation of Welsh schools by admissions policy.

Paragraph 5.16: HEFCE and BIS to engage with DfE with a view to enhancing availability of FSM information at the school level.

Paragraph 5.17: HEFCW to confirm whether data capture extends to both receipt and eligibility, or just to eligibility.

Paragraph 5.8: DELNI to keep UKPITG up to date on developments in the availability of linked schools data over the following year.

Paragraph 5.20: HEFCW to confirm use of WIMD or Communities First Areas as supplementary area-based measures of disadvantage, alongside POLAR3.

Paragraph 6.6: UKPITG members representing the four UK nations to consider the ability of their organisations to contribute to costs of £20,000 on the basis of the usual model.

Paragraph 6.10: Review area leads to document the processes outlined in their updates, and circulate these to the secretariat at the earliest opportunity.

Paragraph 6.10: Upon completion of their draft invitation to tender for work to review the benchmarking statistical methodology, HESA to circulate that draft to UKPITG members for comment and approval.

Paragraph 8.1: HESA to implement the technical changes described in paper UKPITG 15/10.

Paragraph 9.1: UKPITG to recommend to UKPISG that the 2016 publication of UKPIs be made available under an open data licence.

Paragraph 10.1: HESA to publish the agreed non-exempt papers from this December 2015 meeting on their website alongside associated content relating to governance of the UKPIs.

## **Annex 1 – Responses to actions arising under paragraph 6.10**

An action arising from the December 2015 meeting of UKPITG was:

*ACTION: Review area leads to document the processes outlined in their updates, and circulate these to the secretariat at the earliest opportunity.*

Details received from the review area leads are as follows.

### **Proposals about how we should review the statistical methodology for UKPI benchmarking**

The commissioning of a review team to consider the statistical methodology of UKPI benchmarking has been discussed with UKPITG previously. The intention would be for an academic statistician to lead the review, drawing upon a wider review team and potentially advice from the ONS methodology unit. A draft ITT was proposed.

Discussions with the ONS methodology unit have now been commenced. In an initial conversation ONS seemed quite interested in the review and stated that the unit often enlists the expertise of external academic statisticians if necessary for these types of review. It is considered that this may negate the need for UKPITG to commission an academic statistician directly. The benefits of asking the ONS methodology unit to undertake the review appear to be:

1. Since UKPIs are Official Statistics, a formal review by ONS would carry a great deal of weight and credibility.
2. An ONS review would likely be less costly and more efficient in terms of selection processes required to formulate a small review team.
3. The benefit of academic statistician involvement would still be delivered if ONS felt that expertise beyond their own was required.

Additional detail on the review and its requirements has been provided to ONS for their further consideration.

A further update will be provided to UKPITG when a response from ONS has been received, it is anticipated that discussion at the group's next meeting would determine a preferred approach for taking forward this element of the review.

### **Proposals about how we should review the methodology to define groupings within benchmarking factors**

1. This work would be in parallel with the work going on for part (b) – principles for establishing benchmarking factors.
2. Start with a desk review of the methodology and criteria used for grouping at the moment and the reasons why factors are grouped that way, including what was/wasn't done last time and why. Consider things that have changed since then (policies, data collection, institutional factors) that may have an effect. Also to look at other methods being used elsewhere and to what extent current criteria are dependent on factors currently used for benchmarking.

3. Come up with proposals for any new criteria for grouping and changes to current methodology. (e.g. does anything need to be changed to take account of regional differences for school based measures?)
4. Desk review and proposals to be done in conjunction with HEFCE and also with HESA to get background and detail on current methodology and criteria.
5. HESA to test any proposals using recently calculated PIs.
6. After review and testing, take proposals to UKPITG. Decide whether there needs to be an external check and review group for the proposals, e.g. an ONS methodologist, members of UKPITG, institutional representatives. Use any ONS methodology resource available from other strands. Changes to methodology and criteria to be included in the consultation.

### **UK Performance indicators benchmarking review – stakeholder engagement**

The potential routes for stakeholder engagement (as part of the benchmarking review) have been explored with colleagues across the UK Administrations and funding councils, who were asked to provide details of groups already in place with whom engagement would be appropriate. It is suggested that these groups would be the most efficient and effective way to communicate with relevant interested organisations.

The table below outlines those groups/fora currently in place. It is possible there are other groups not listed here, but this provides a reasonable basis for a starting point for any communications for the review.

One area that probably needs further investigation is how the benchmarking review may fit in with the TEF development. While primarily England based, there is wider interest across the UK. The planned technical consultation, later this year, will include consulting on the metrics (and benchmarks) for use in the TEF. It is reasonable to assume that UKPI approaches may be included within that consultation. As a result, that exercise may well generate significant feedback which could be fed into the UKPI benchmarking review, and could negate the need for UKPITG to issue their own open invitation to comment / survey.

<b>Name of group</b>	<b>Who they are</b>	<b>What they do</b>	<b>When they do it</b>
<b>Wales</b>			
HEFCW data workshop	Welsh HE sector (HEIs and FEIs)	Covers use of data, data collection, HESA data etc can include a discussion about the UKPIs	Once a year  Next meeting: likely July 2016

Universities Wales Student Returns Group	Welsh HEIs, Universities Wales, HEFCW, HESA, plus others depending on the content of the meeting	To discuss data returns, discussion of UKPIs would be covered	Twice a year  Next meeting: 22 April 2016
<b>England</b>			
Higher Education Strategic Planners Association  <a href="http://www.hespa.ac.uk/">http://www.hespa.ac.uk/</a>	Membership organisation representing planners working in Higher Education across the UK	Primarily interested in factors influencing UKPIs, rather than underlying approach.	Regular Executive Meetings – every 2 months or so  Next meetings: 9 <sup>th</sup> March 2016 26 May 2016
TEF Consultation	No specific group set up, but potential route through to relevant parties.		Spring/summer 2016
<b>Scotland</b>			
Institutional Group on Statistics for SFC (IGS-SFC)	All 19 HEIs in Scotland (including OU), can send a representative to the group meetings. Representatives typically involved in compiling their institution's SFC Early Statistics Return and/or their HESA Student Returns. Usually come from registry or planning departments at their institution.  Also contains representatives from the Scottish Government Lifelong learning Statistics Branch, Universities Scotland and HESA.	Consult on matters relating to data collections and interpretation of data. The group is given updates on matters relating to the UKPIs. The group meetings would be an appropriate forum for discussing technical matters relating to the UKPIs.	The group usually meets twice a year.  Next meeting: TBC - around April 2016.  If response needed prior to this then we could consult the group by correspondence.
Scottish Universities Planners Group	TBA	Potential suitable group for consulting on	TBC

		matters relating to the UKPIs.	
<b>Northern Ireland</b>			
TBA			

Next steps

- Confirmation of the above groups/routes as suitable for our purposes.
- Additional of any groups not currently listed, including Northern Ireland and BIS.
- An update on TEF consultation as necessary.
- Confirmation of required timetable for this stakeholder engagement plan.