

# Strategic Plan 2014-18

A world with data at the heart of  
understanding and decision making

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## Foreword from the President

If you think that understanding and use of numbers is important, join us and get involved in our Society. We are an active community of over 6000 members who believe that statistics offers something special to our understanding of the world and the decisions we make. If you are already a member, think about what you can contribute. The Society is its members. What the Society achieves is what we achieve working together.

This document gives a summary of our strategy for the next four years. It is a call to action for the statistics profession and for everyone who thinks that statistical method, statistical thinking and statistical literacy matter if we are to make good choices.

The strategy is the product of an extensive process of engagement across the Society and beyond. I would like to pay tribute to Andy Garrett and all the other members of the Long Term Strategy Group who organised such a thoughtful and inclusive endeavour. I would also like to thank the entire staff of the Society for their commitment to our cause.

It is now for all of us to help the Society make a reality of this inspiring plan. Let us use statistics to make an impact.

John Pullinger  
President



# 1

## **STATISTICS AND THE PUBLIC INTEREST**

For statistics to be used effectively in the public interest, so that policy formulation and decision making are informed by evidence for the good of society

# 2

## **EDUCATION AND STATISTICAL LITERACY**

For society to be more statistically literate, so that people's understanding of data, risk and probability can inform their daily decision making, leading to better outcomes

# 3

## **DEVELOPING THE PROFESSION**

For a strong body of professional statisticians to maintain and develop the skills they need so that they can critically apply methodology, interpret results and communicate findings

# 4

## **STRENGTHENING THE DISCIPLINE**

For statistics as a discipline to thrive, so that methodology is advanced, applied and made accessible, leading to greater understanding of an increasingly complex world

# 5

## **ENGAGING THE MEMBERSHIP, STAFF AND PARTNERS**

For an engaged and energised membership and staff to work collaboratively with partner organisations and other stakeholders in meeting these goals, so that the Society can maximise its impact

# 6

## **BEING A WELL-RUN ORGANISATION**

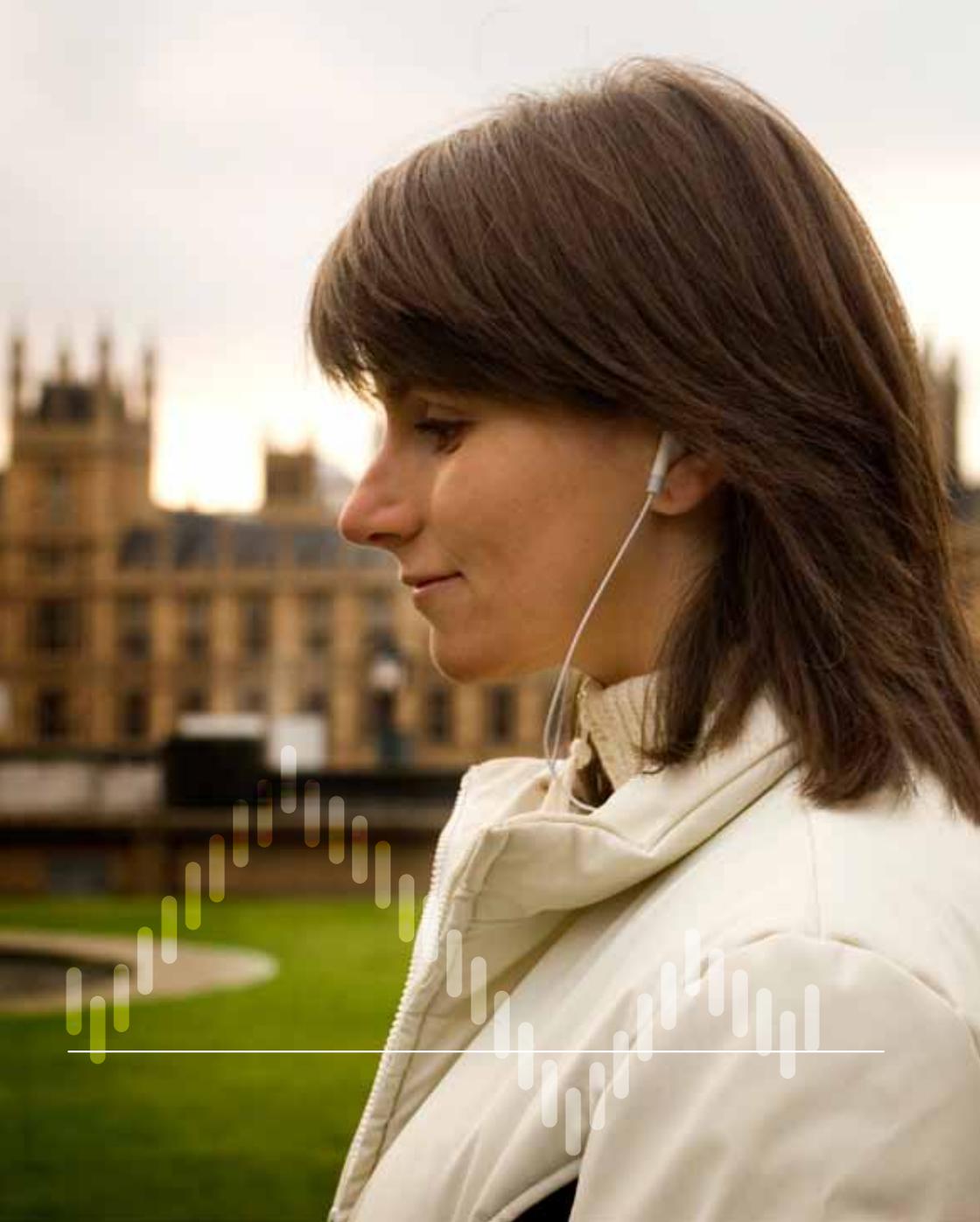
For the RSS to be a financially sustainable and well run organisation, with effective governance and use of technology, so that it will grow in relevance and exert influence



# 1

## STATISTICS AND THE PUBLIC INTEREST

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**For statistics to be used effectively in the public interest, so that policy formulation and decision making are informed by evidence for the good of society**

### **Context**

Decisions affecting all citizens are conditioned by statistics. The growing movement towards “open data” and “big data” offers a major opportunity but also a challenge.

### **Role**

The Society has a role to help ensure that statistics are used to help deliver justice, build a strong economy and create a sustainable future for our children.

### **Activities**

- Supporting official statistics and evidence-based policy making
- Giving users of statistics a voice
- Research, policy, public affairs and influencing
- Awards for government and pharmaceutical statisticians

### **Priorities**

- Strengthen external facing, proactive policy work on key issues such as “open data” and become increasingly influential
- Broaden focus on influencing policy from government into other areas such as health and medicine, science, business and finance
- Develop “Statisticians in Society” initiative to encourage statisticians to volunteer to support charities and other socially useful initiatives which need statistical support.

# 2



## EDUCATION AND STATISTICAL LITERACY

**For society to be more statistically literate, so that people's understanding of data, risk and probability can inform their daily decision making, leading to better outcomes**

### Context

Not enough people understand and appreciate the value of statistics and statistical thinking. Statistical literacy is weak at all levels. Research shows that the UK is an outlier internationally in the low numbers of students doing any form of mathematics after the age of 16. Parliamentarians, public decision-makers and the media all often struggle with basic statistical concepts. Public trust in official statistics is low.

### Role

Through the getstats campaign the Society can provide national and international leadership to the drive for statistical literacy.

### Activities

- Campaigning for better teaching of statistical literacy at all levels in schools, colleges, universities and in lifelong learning
- Significance magazine
- Promoting the public understanding of statistics
- Training for parliamentarians and parliamentary staff
- Journalism training and awards
- Training and support for a wide variety of groups seeking

to improve their confidence and competence in statistics

### Priorities

- Influence policy agenda on schools curricula and practice
- Work with universities, research councils, funders and other learned societies to support learning about statistics in any discipline
- Build on the momentum of the getstats campaign to develop the statistical literacy of key audiences in the public sphere including the media, politicians, educators and the general public
- Market Significance magazine



## DEVELOPING THE PROFESSION

**For a strong body of professional statisticians to maintain and develop the skills they need so that they can critically apply methodology, interpret results and communicate findings**

### Context

Statistics is a profession which is relevant and increasingly valued across a broad range of sectors of industry, and in commerce, government, academia and research organisations. In some of these sectors, the work of statisticians is subject to regulation.

### Role

As a professional body for statisticians with a global reach, the Society has a pivotal role to play.

### Activities

- Professional qualifications and revalidation
- Examinations
- Accreditation of university courses
- Training and continuing professional development
- Scientific meetings
- Awards schemes for outstanding professional work

### Priorities

- Successfully implement revalidation for the CStat award
- Conduct and implement a review of RSS work on professional affairs, ensuring that the Society continues to deliver and promote high quality professional awards and examinations and accredits university courses that provide the required educational foundation
- Maintain up-to-date knowledge of the needs of professional statisticians and deliver services to address these needs

# 4

## STRENGTHENING THE DISCIPLINE

**For statistics as a discipline to thrive, so that methodology is advanced, applied and made accessible, leading to greater understanding of an increasingly complex world**

### Context

Research funding for statistical science in general is under pressure due to reductions in government funding. There is recognition from some research councils that statistics is a priority area. Funding for Masters' programmes has been reducing for several years. There is concern about the 'pipeline' of people moving into statistical roles at all levels, both for methodological and applied research in

universities and also in industry and more widely.

### Role

The Society has a special role as advocate for the discipline.

### Activities

- Journals
- Ordinary meetings, section and local group events
- Conference
- Academic affairs lobbying
- Joint working with the Council for Mathematical Sciences
- Honours for excellence in academic work

### Priorities

- Preserve high quality journals and strong meetings programme and add value to them through activities which can increase access and interaction
- Develop an influential voice for statisticians in debates in higher education to ensure their interests are taken into account
- Review the work of Sections to ensure they are aligned to the goals of this strategy
- Increase attendance at the annual Conference



## ENGAGING THE MEMBERSHIP, STAFF AND PARTNERS

**For an engaged and energised membership and staff to work collaboratively with partner organisations and other stakeholders in meeting these goals, so that the Society can maximise its impact**

### Context

Membership organisations are under pressure in recruiting and retaining members. Members have indicated that they would like to be more involved in the work of the Society. The Society has a committed and motivated staff with a good mix of skills and experience. There is a multitude of potential partners who share at least some of our goals.

### Activities

- Volunteer opportunities
- Member recruitment and communications
- Local groups
- A wide variety of partnership projects and engagement
- Staff development

### Priorities

- Find ways to substantially increase the involvement and interaction of members, in particular by making it easier to volunteer for the Society
- Increase membership within the UK and across the world
- Improve the quality of data the Society has about its members
- Develop stronger partnerships

- with a wider range of targeted organisations in order to increase the Society's influence
- Improve staff engagement and development

**For the RSS to be a financially sustainable and well-run organisation, with effective governance and use of technology, so that it will grow in relevance, exert influence and have wider impact**

#### **Context**

The RSS has a healthy mix of funding streams, owns the building at Errol Street and has relatively healthy free reserves. The biggest medium term threat is what will happen to journals income following the "open access" policy regime. The Society

could do more to act with one voice and to embrace technology. There is a lack of monitoring and evaluation.

#### **Activities**

- Society governance through the Council and various committees as well as through effective policies
- Society management under the direction of the Executive Director
- Managing and developing the assets of the Society

#### **Priorities**

- Strengthen the governance and identity of the Society to become more strategic and joined up
- Maintain and protect the income of the Society despite pressures from open access publication and attrition of membership
- Ensure effective use of technology to deliver high quality services and, in particular, to increase involvement and interaction with members
- Ensure the premises of the RSS are fit for purpose for members and staff.





**ROYAL  
STATISTICAL  
SOCIETY**

DATA | EVIDENCE | DECISIONS

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