ROYAL STATISTICAL SOCIETY

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PRESS RELEASE

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RSS WELCOMES THE SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE "BIG DATA DILEMMA" REPORT

The Royal Statistical Society (RSS) welcomes the Science & Technology Select Committee report published today, which highlights the potential value big data has for the UK, and the action now needed to use big data ethically and to its full potential.

The RSS is pleased that that many of its recommendations in its Data Manifesto, and written and spoken evidence given to the Big Data Inquiry have been included in the Science & Technology Committee final report recommendations.

These include:

- A Council of Data Ethics within the Alan Turing Institute as a means of addressing ethical issues around big data and to ensure good practice around big data generally.
- A Government commitment to a substantial role in improving data skills, as highlighted in the RSS Data Manifesto, to ensure that we have the necessary big data skills base that the UK needs.
- Opening government departmental data and breaking down data silos, so more datasets can be delivered to others in Government and to external users.
- A right of access to data for the Office of National Statistics and developing a framework for auditing the quality of data within Government departments.

Commenting on the report, Hetan Shah, Executive Director of the RSS, said:

"This report highlights the potential transformational power of data for our society, but it shows we need to get the ethical infrastructure right to maintain public trust. In this era of austerity, Government needs to sweat its assets by sharing data better both across departments and with external users."

ENDS

NOTES

The RSS written evidence to the Big Data Inquiry is available at http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/science-and-technology-committee/big-data-dilemma/written/20734.html

CONTACTS

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The Royal Statistical Society (RSS) founded in 1834 is one of the world's most distinguished and renowned statistical societies. It is a learned society for statistics, a professional body for statisticians and a charity which promotes statistics, data and evidence for the public good. Today the Society has nearly 8000 members around the world. www.rss.org.uk