

Productivity Statistics User Group workshop: Summary and Outcomes

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Introduction

User engagement is important to understanding the needs of those who use our statistics. It helps ensure that the statistics we produce are suitable for the purposes to which they are put. To this end the Productivity Statistics User Group Workshop was created. The user group workshop is held annually, with the previous workshop held in January 2014.

ONS staff and representatives from other organisations presented on the quality and use of productivity statistics. Open discussion then followed on from this. A feedback questionnaire issued at the event and open discussion on the day provide the feedback presented below.

The questionnaire, all presentations from this workshop and details of the previous workshop are available on the [Productivity Measures Guidance & Methodology page](#) of the ONS website.

Presentations

ONS would like to extend thanks to those who contributed to the event.

Peter Patterson (ONS)	Introduction and Overview
Joe Murphy and Emily Connors (ONS)	Volume Index of Capital Services and Multi-factor Productivity
Professor Jonathan Haskel (Imperial)	Accounting for the UK Productivity Puzzle: Current Data and Predictions
Stuart Newman (ONS)	Labour Productivity: Recent estimates
Mark Franklin (ONS)	Productivity Branch Work Plan

Users

There were close to 40 attendees at the user group workshop, including presenters. There were 10 responses to the questionnaire on the day.

Introduction and Welcome

Peter Patterson (ONS) introduced the event and provided an overview of productivity issues we are facing.

Volume Index of Capital Services (VICS) and Multi-factor Productivity (MFP)

Joe Murphy (ONS) presented methodology behind the volume index of capital services (VICS), one of the inputs into multi-factor productivity (MFP), and presented findings from the most recent publication. Emily Connors (ONS) then provided a description of how MFP is measured and explained the most recent published results.

A lot of interest was expressed in both of these releases, particularly regarding the methodology behind the VICS estimates. Several users asked about the use of deflators on capital and others asked if it was possible to provide international comparisons of MFP and its components. It was agreed the productivity branch will look into whether international comparisons can be made, possibly using EU KLEMS methodology.

Accounting for the UK Productivity Puzzle: Current Data and Predictions- Professor Jonathan Haskel

Professor Haskel, of Imperial College London, gave a presentation on the findings of a recent paper published with Peter Goodridge (Imperial) and Gavin Wallis (Bank of England), on UK total factor productivity. The paper overlaps with the Productivity Branch's MFP work, with Professor Haskel's work providing further details on the various factors that have affected the UK's recent productivity growth. Included in this were the potential impacts of capital scrapping and the inclusion of research and development.

Labour Productivity: Recent estimates

(NB: Previously it was publicised that Jonathan Ashworth from Morgan Stanley would present, Jonathan was unfortunately not able to attend due to illness and Stuart Newman from ONS presented in replacement)

Stuart Newman (ONS) presented recent labour productivity estimates, including self employment productivity estimates published last summer. Users gave useful feedback about how we present our statistics, particularly regarding the cumulative charts given in the Quarterly Labour Productivity Bulletin. Users said they found cumulative charts confusing to understand and further, it would be helpful to focus on annual changes rather than quarterly changes. The Productivity Branch will take this on board and look into other forms of presenting the statistics.

Productivity Branch Work Plan

Mark Franklin (ONS) presented on the recently published Productivity Branch Work Plan, detailing what the branch has achieved since the last published work plan and what the branch will be focusing on in the future. The work plan was largely received well. Comments were made regarding the usefulness of the International Comparisons of Productivity (ICP) publication as there are other sources for this information (e.g. OECD). After some discussion, it was agreed that given previous user support for ICP, media attention given to the publication and the relatively small resource in its production, it would still be carried forward.

Future engagement

ONS will maintain communication with users via the productivity inbox (productivity@ons.gsi.gov.uk), and, given the positive feedback of the event itself, will continue to hold a user group workshop annually.