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Social Research that works for society

Public confidence in official statistics - 2016

Author: Ian Simpson



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NatCen Social Research

35 Northampton Square

London

EC1V 0AX

Tel. 020 7250 1866

Fax. 020 7250 1524

E-mail: info@natcen.ac.uk

www.natcen.ac.uk

Contents

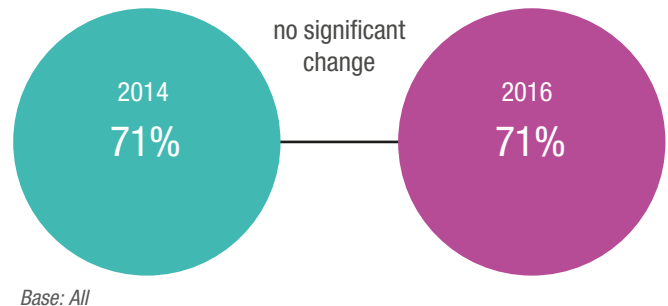
Executive summary	3
1 Introduction	6
Background	6
Methods	6
2 Awareness and use of official statistics	9
Awareness of ONS and UKSA	9
Participation in and use of official statistics	9
3 Trust in ONS and official statistics	13
Trust in the ONS	13
Trust in statistics produced by ONS	13
4 General attitudes to official statistics	17
Accuracy, use and handling of official statistics	17
5 Questions about specific sets of statistics	21
Do statistical series accurately reflect what is happening in the UK?	21
Are specific statistics free from political interference?	21
Usefulness and timeliness of specific statistics	23
6 Demographic differences	25
Gender	25
Age	25
Socio-economic status and level of education	25



Executive summary

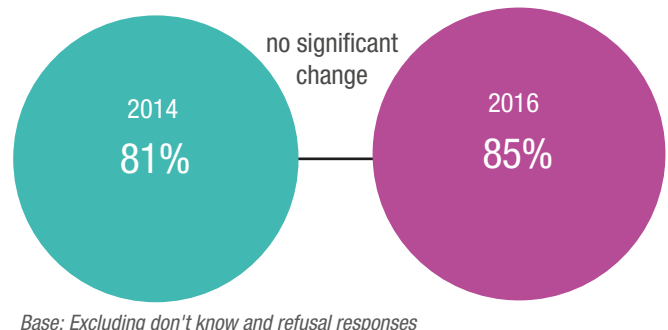
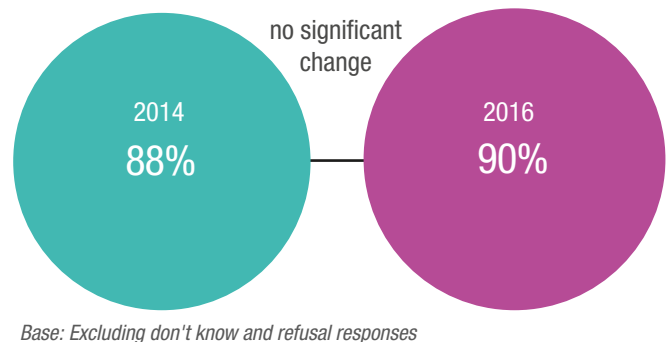
Public awareness of the Office for National Statistics (ONS) remains at the level recorded in 2014

- In 2016, 71% of the public are aware of ONS



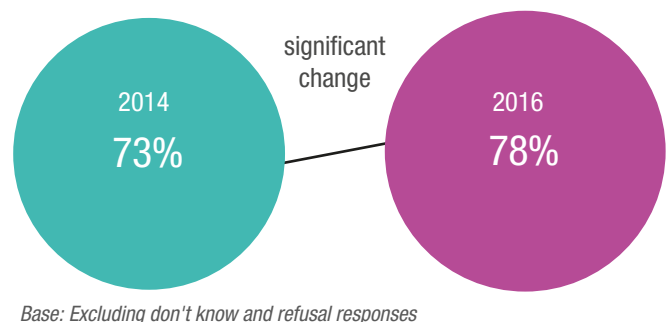
Levels of trust in ONS and the statistics it produces remain high, having not changed significantly since 2014

- In 2016, of those able to give an opinion, 90% trust ONS and 85% trust the statistics produced by ONS
- In 2014, of those able to give an opinion, 88% trusted ONS and 81% trusted the statistics produced by ONS



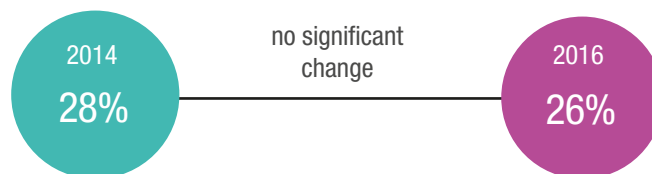
There has been a modest increase in agreement that official figures are generally accurate

- Of those able to give an opinion, 78% agree that official figures are accurate, compared with 73% in 2014

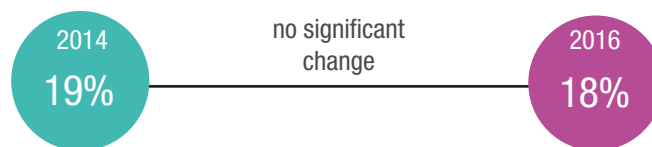


There has been no improvement to the low numbers of people who think that Government and newspapers present official figures honestly

- Of those able to give an opinion, 26% agree that Government presents official figures honestly
- Of those able to give an opinion, 18% agree that newspapers present official figures honestly



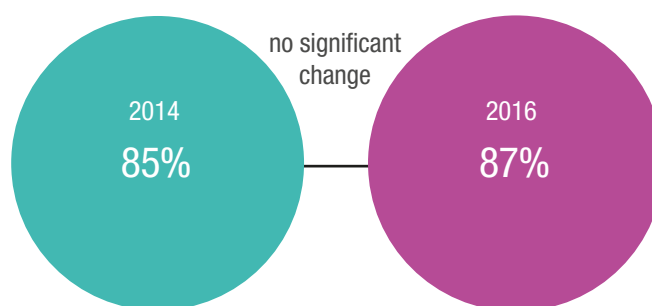
Base: Excluding don't know and refusal responses



Base: Excluding don't know and refusal responses

Perceptions of the accuracy of official statistics vary depending on the statistical series asked about

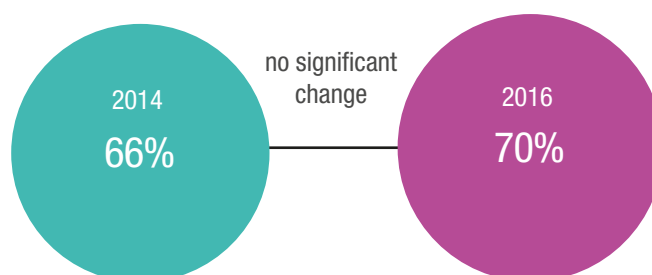
- In 2016, of those able to give an opinion, 87% agree that the Census accurately reflects changes in the UK, while 71% think this is the case for crime statistics
- In 2014, of those able to give an opinion, 85% agreed that the Census accurately reflected changes in the UK, while 63% thought this was the case for crime statistics



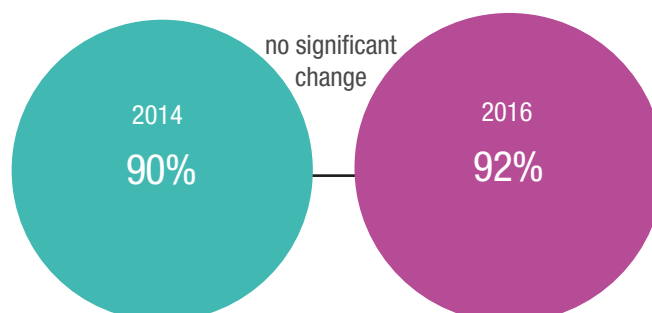
Base: Excluding don't know and refusal responses

A majority think statistics produced by ONS are free from political interference and are important for understanding Britain

- Of those able to give an opinion, 70% agree that statistics produced by ONS are free from political interference
- Of those able to give an opinion, 92% agree that official statistics are important for understanding Britain



Base: Excluding don't know and refusal responses



Base: Excluding don't know and refusal responses



1 Introduction

Background

This report presents findings on public attitudes to official statistics in Britain, based on results from the 2016 *British Social Attitudes* survey (BSA), conducted by NatCen Social Research¹ (NatCen). It explores levels of awareness, use of, and trust in official statistics in Britain. It also explores changes in attitudes to official statistics over time and variation in attitudes by demographics.

The research was commissioned by the UK Statistics Authority,² an independent body at arm's length from Government. Its executive office, the Office for National Statistics (ONS), is the UK's National Statistical Institute and largest producer of official statistics. The Authority also has an independent regulatory function (Office for Statistics Regulation), which ensures that statistics are produced and disseminated in the public interest and acts as a watchdog against misuse of statistics.

The UK Statistics Authority previously commissioned NatCen to conduct a survey of public confidence in official statistics in 2014³ and 2009.⁴ The 2009 questions were asked as part of NatCen's Omnibus survey. Earlier surveys of public confidence in official statistics were conducted in 2004, 2005 and 2007, as part of the ONS Omnibus survey.

Since the 2014 survey, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation (OECD) Model Questionnaire for measuring trust in official statistics⁵ has been used. This was developed by the OECD through harmonisation of existing national surveys on public trust in statistics, including the questionnaire previously used in the UK. The same questions were asked on

BSA 2016, plus one additional question asking whether and how the use of official statistics in the EU referendum campaign affected people's trust in official statistics.

The OECD Model questionnaire has been asked in a number of other countries in recent years. Comparison is made with data from Sweden (2014), Denmark (2012) and Australia (2010).

The full list of questions can be found in Appendix C of the accompanying [technical report](#).

Methods

The survey was designed to yield a representative sample of adults aged 18 or over in England, Wales and Scotland, using a sampling frame drawn from the Postcode Address File (PAF). The module of questions on public confidence in official statistics was asked of a random two-thirds of the overall sample. Face-to-face interviews were conducted using Computer Assisted Interviewing (CAI).

Fieldwork took place between July and November 2016. A total of 1,968 interviews were undertaken with adults aged 18 or over. The response rate was between 46.1% and 46.6%.

More information on the survey methodology and response rates can be found in Appendix B of the accompanying [technical report](#).

For consistency, respondents who answered "don't know" or refused to answer a particular question are excluded from the base in most

1 <http://www.natcen.ac.uk/>

2 <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/>

3 <http://www.natcen.ac.uk/our-research/research/public-confidence-in-official-statistics/>

4 <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/reports---correspondence/reports/strengthening-user-engagement--final-report.pdf>

5 <http://www.oecd.org/std/Stat%20newsletter%20final%20for%20the%20web.pdf>

instances. Where this is the case, the wording 'of those able to give an opinion' is used in this report. This approach was taken in the previous report on public confidence in official statistics, which was based on BSA 2014 data. We are taking this approach again for comparative purposes. It is important to note that for a number of questions, the proportion of people who answered "don't know" was relatively high, up to around a quarter of people. The proportion of people answering "don't know" can be found in the detailed tables in Appendix A of the [technical report](#) that accompanies this report. Where those who answered "don't

know" or refused to answer the question are included in the base, the wording of 'the public' is used in this report.

When a difference between the 2014 and 2016 data has been found to be statistically significant (at the 95% level), this has been stated explicitly. When testing for statistical significance between years, 'don't know' responses were always included in the analysis.

Data relating to individual questions does not always add up to 100% due to rounding.



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2 Awareness and use of official statistics

Key points

- Public awareness of ONS remains relatively high, at 71%, the same as in 2014.
- Awareness of the UK Statistics Authority remains lower, at 32%.
- A quarter of the British public (25%), report that they have used statistics produced by ONS.
- There has not been any statistically significant changes in awareness of ONS or the UK Statistics Authority, or in public use of official statistics, between 2014 and 2016.

27% who say the same of ONS. Awareness of the UK Statistics Authority is not significantly different to the level recorded in 2014.

The British public appears to have a lower level of awareness of ONS than the Australian, Danish and Swedish populations have of their National Statistical Institutes. Around 9 in 10 people in each of these countries claimed to have heard of the equivalent statistical organisation, when the question was last asked in each of these countries.

Participation in and use of official statistics

Awareness of ONS and UKSA

Awareness of ONS remains relatively high. Over two-thirds (71%) of the British public have heard of it, the same proportion as in 2014. However, levels of awareness of ONS still lag behind awareness of some other institutions. Apart from ONS, the organisation with the lowest level of public awareness is again IBM⁶, which 81% of the public had heard of (Figure 1).

The public's depth of awareness of the ONS is not significantly different to when it was last measured in 2014, with only 16% saying they know ONS "well". In addition to just over one quarter of people (27%) who have not heard of it at all, nearly a quarter say they have only heard ONS's name (22%) (Figure 2).

Compared with ONS, public awareness of the UK Statistics Authority remains lower. Nearly six in ten people (59%) have never heard of the UK Statistics Authority, compared with only

As well as asking whether respondents had heard of ONS itself, BSA 2016 measured awareness of ONS's surveys and products by asking respondents whether they had taken part in any of the surveys run by ONS or in the Census and whether they had used any of the statistical outputs ONS produces.

A majority (64%) of people recalled participating in any of the surveys run by ONS or in the Census. Unsurprisingly, there was a big difference in the proportions of people who recalled taking part in the Census (60%) and those who recalled taking part in any ONS survey based on a sample of the population (from 1% for the Labour Force Survey to 3% for the International Passenger Survey).

A quarter of the British public (25%) have used or referred to statistics produced by ONS for some purpose, such as study, work or personal interest. This is not significantly different to the proportion that reported doing so in 2014. 4% say they use these statistics frequently, 15%

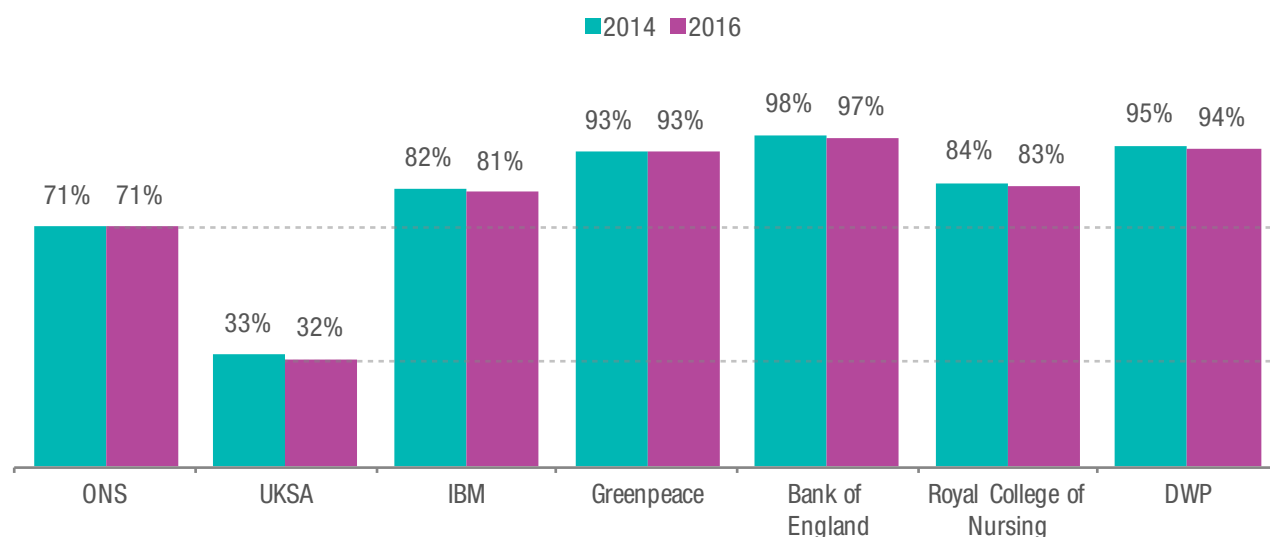
6 IBM stands for the International Business Machines Corporation and is an American multinational technology and consulting corporation.

use them occasionally and 5% used them five years ago or more, proportions that once again are not significantly different to when the question was last asked (Figure 3).

People with a degree are more than twice as likely to have used official statistics (52%), than the population as a whole (25%).

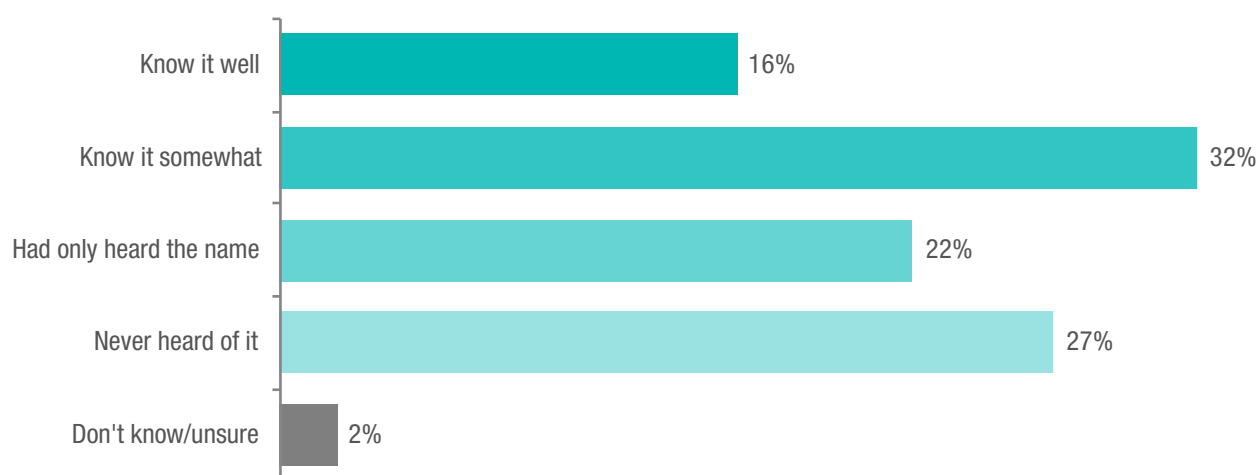
“ Awareness of ONS remains high at 71%, the same as 2014. Public awareness of the UK Statistics Authority remains lower, with nearly six in ten having never heard of the organisation. ”

Figure 1. Public awareness of ONS, UKSA and comparator organisations 2014-2016



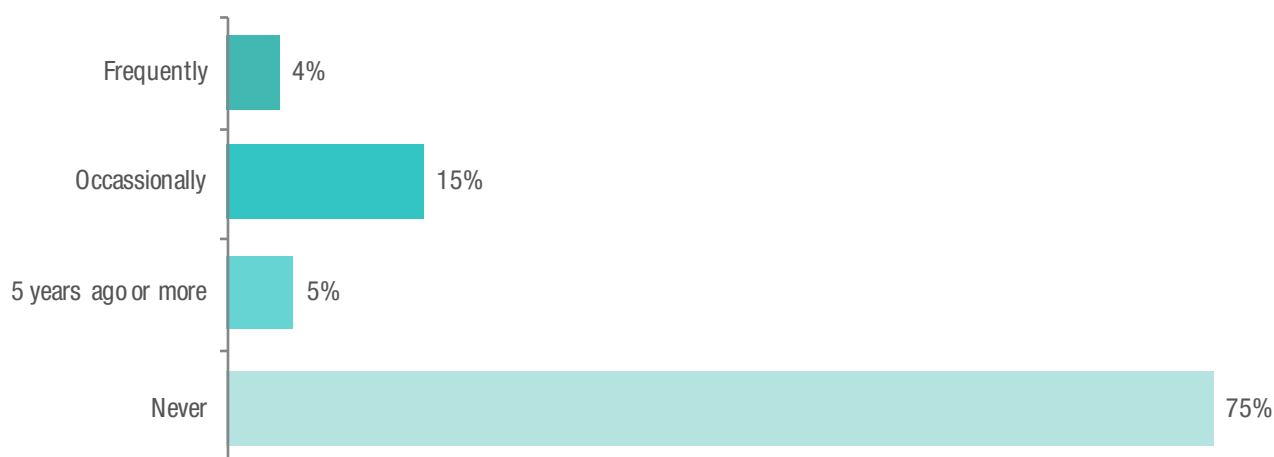
Base: All

Figure 2. Awareness levels of ONS 2016



Base: All

Figure 3. Public use or reference to ONS statistics



Base: All



3 Trust in ONS and official statistics

Key points

- Trust in ONS as an institution remains high – 90% of those who expressed an opinion either trusted it a great deal or tended to trust it.
- However, nearly a quarter (24%) did not express any opinion – stating that they did not know whether or not they trusted ONS.
- Trust in the statistics produced by ONS is slightly lower than trust in ONS as an institution – 85% of those who expressed an opinion.
- No statistically significant changes in trust in ONS or trust in statistics produced by ONS occurred between 2014 and 2016.

Trust in the ONS

In addition to comparing awareness of ONS with awareness of other institutions, BSA 2016 also compared trust in ONS with trust in other British institutions. Respondents were asked to say, for each institution, whether they tend to trust or tend to distrust it.

Trust in ONS as an institution is high – excluding those who said they did not know whether or not they trusted ONS, 90% of the British public say they either trust ONS a great deal or tend to trust it, very similar to the proportion who expressed such trust in 2014 (Figure 4). This level of trust was again higher than that expressed in relation to any of the other organisations asked about (Figure 5).

However, as in 2014, the proportion of people who said they did not know whether or not they trusted ONS was far higher than for the other organisations asked about (24%, compared

with 2%-9% for the other organisations). When those who said they do not know whether or not they trust ONS are included in the base, 69% of the British public as a whole say they trust ONS a great deal or tend to trust it.

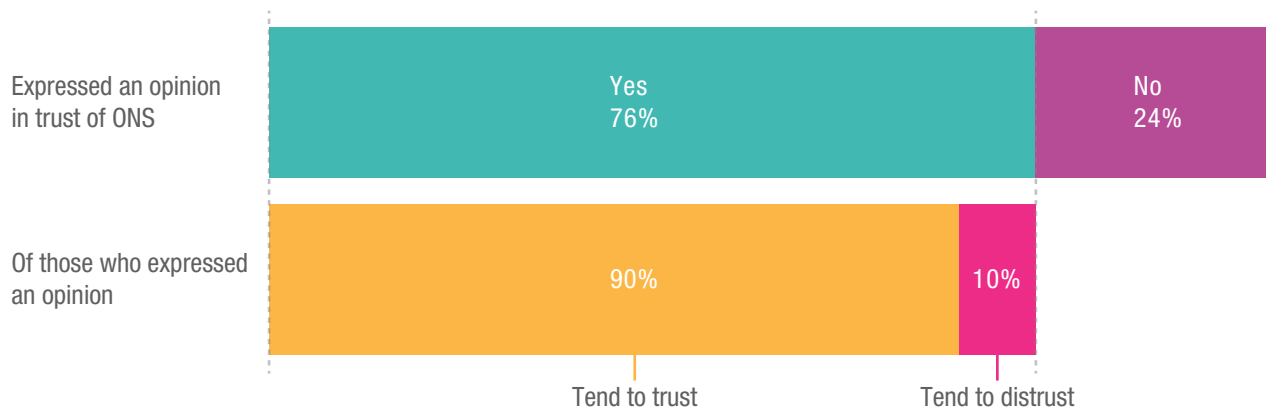
The levels of trust expressed in ONS (90% of those who expressed a view) were slightly higher than those recorded for Statistics Sweden (84% of those who expressed a view) but slightly lower than those recorded for the Australian Statistics Bureau (93% of those who expressed a view) and for Statistics Denmark (97% of those who expressed a view) (Figure 6).

Trust in statistics produced by ONS

In addition to exploring trust in the institution of the ONS, BSA 2016 also asked whether people trust statistics produced by the ONS, giving the examples of statistics on unemployment, inflation, economic growth or life expectancy. Excluding don't knows, 85% said they trusted ONS statistics. However, the proportion who said they did not know whether or not they trusted ONS statistics was again quite high (18%). These proportions are not significantly different to those recorded in 2014.

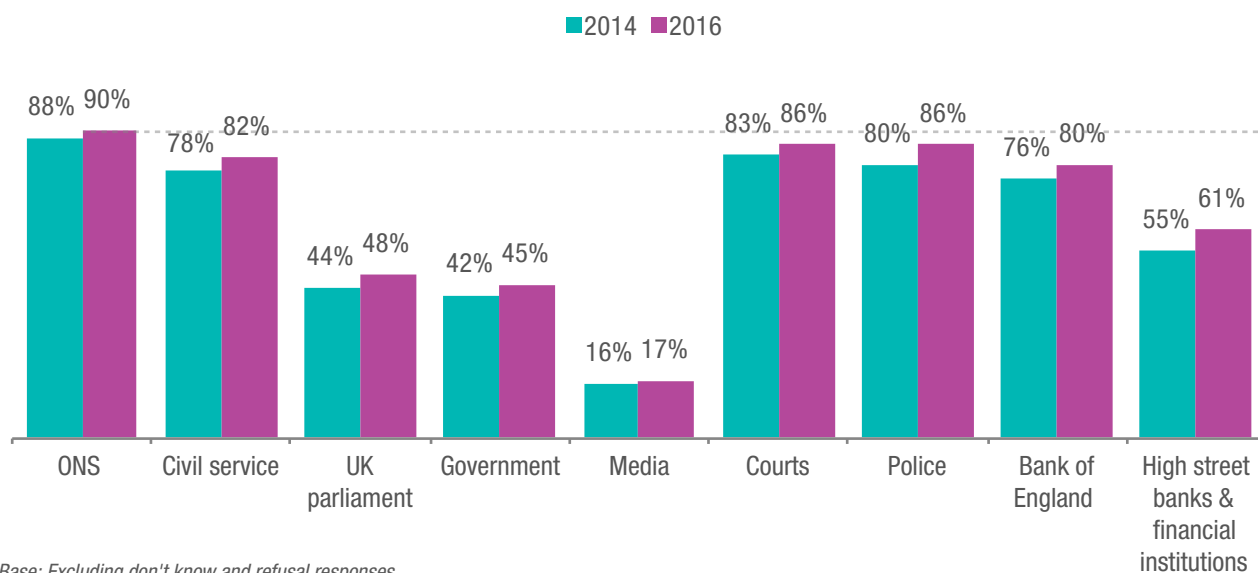
There is a strong (though not perfect) relationship between trusting ONS as an institution and trusting ONS statistics – 89% of those who trust ONS also trust ONS statistics. However, even among the relatively small proportion of people who distrust ONS as an institution, 28% say they trust the statistics they produce.

Figure 4. Trust in ONS



Base: First box (all); second box (excluding don't know and refusal responses)

Figure 5. Public trust of ONS and comparator organisations 2014-2016



Base: Excluding don't know and refusal responses

Figure 6. Public trust of ONS and official statistics bodies from other countries



Base: Excluding don't know and refusal responses

Relationship between trust and use

Those who have used official statistics are more likely to trust them than those who have not used them. However, trust in official statistics is high even among non-users. Excluding those answering “don’t know”, trust increases from 82% among non-users, to 92% among users of ONS statistics.

Reasons for trusting ONS statistics

Respondents who said that they trusted statistics produced by the ONS were asked the reasons for this. They were not prompted but interviewers coded their answers using a pre-determined code-frame, with an option for recording “other” responses that did not fit any of these codes.

The most popular reason respondents gave for having trust in official statistics was that ONS does not have a vested interest in the results (mentioned by 33% of those who said they trusted official statistics). The next two most common reasons for trusting official statistics were trusting the figures due to personal experience (17%), and from having heard or read something good about the figures (14%). These were also the three most popular reasons for trusting official statistics in 2014 (Figure 7).

Reasons for distrusting ONS statistics

Those participants who said that they did not trust statistics produced by the ONS were also asked to give the reasons for this. The two most commonly reported answers, as in 2014, were that the figures are misrepresented or spun by politicians or the media (31%) and the belief that Government has a vested interest in the results (22%) (Figure 7).

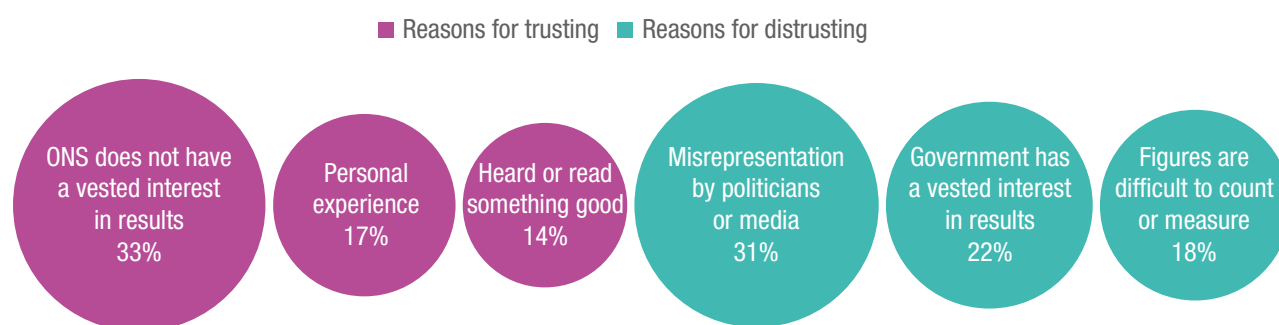
Impact of EU referendum

In BSA 2016, respondents were asked “how, if at all, did the use of official statistics during the 2016 EU referendum campaign affect your trust in official statistics?”.

Over half of people (54%) said the EU referendum campaign did not affect their level of trust in official statistics. One third (33%) said the campaign made them trust official statistics less and only 8% said the campaign made them trust official statistics more.

While this is an interesting finding, it should be noted that although a significant minority of people said that the campaign made them trust official statistics less, overall trust in official statistics is at the same level as it was in 2014 – meaning we cannot directly discern this effect in the data.

Figure 7. Top three reasons for trusting/distrusting ONS statistics



Base: Respondents saying trust / do not trust ONS statistics



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4 General attitudes to official statistics

Key points

- There has been a statistically significant increase in agreement that official figures are generally accurate. Of those able to give an opinion, 78% agree that official figures are generally accurate, up from 73% in 2014.
- Only 26% of those expressing a view agree that Government presents official figures honestly when talking about its policies. This is not significantly different from the number of people expressing this view in 2014.
- While people are sceptical about Government use of official figures, a majority of people (70% of those expressing an opinion) think ONS figures themselves are free from political interference.
- Of those able to give an opinion, 18% agree that newspapers present official figures honestly.
- Of those expressing a view, most people (92%) agree that ONS statistics are important to understanding our country.
- There remains almost universal agreement that it is important for an independent body, like the UK Statistics Authority, to ensure official statistics are free from political interference and to speak out publically against misuse of official statistics.
- Just over two-thirds of the public (67%) say official statistics should be made equally available to everybody, including the public, at the same time. This represents a small but statistically significant decrease on the 71% who said this in 2014.

Accuracy, use and handling of official statistics

Perceived accuracy of official statistics

Respondents to BSA 2016 were asked whether they agreed or disagreed that official figures are generally accurate. Of those able to express an opinion, 78% agree that official figures are generally accurate and just 22% disagree. This is a statistically significant increase on the 73% recorded in 2014. However, it is important to note that almost 1 in 6 (17%) responded 'don't know' at this question.

The British public does not appear to have much confidence in the honesty with which official statistics are presented by the Government or by newspapers. Excluding those who could not give an opinion, only 26% agree that "the Government presents official figures honestly when talking about its policies", while only 18% agree that "newspapers present official figures honestly". Levels of agreement with these views identified in 2014 were not significantly different.

Whether ONS statistics are free from political interference

Although the findings above suggest that people are sceptical about how official figures are used by Government, this does not appear to translate into scepticism about political interference in the figures themselves. Over two-thirds (70%) of those who expressed an opinion agree that "statistics produced by ONS are free from political interference". This does not represent a significant change on 2014.

Again, around a quarter (24%), were unsure how to answer this question.

Under current Government rules, Government ministers in the UK are shown official statistics prior to their release to the public. Respondents to BSA 2016 were given this information, and then asked to say whether they thought the current rules were right, or whether they should be changed so that official statistics are made available to everyone at the same time.

Just over two-thirds (67%) said official statistics should be made equally available to everybody, including the public, at the same time. However, there was a relatively small, but statistically significant, increase in the proportion thinking that the current rules are correct, from 25% in 2014, to 29% in 2016.

Most people in Britain agree that the statistics produced by ONS are important to understand our country – 92% of those who expressed a view felt this. While few disagreed with

the importance of ONS statistics, around 1 in 5 (19%) were not sure whether they were important or not. These figures are not significantly different from those recorded in 2014.

As well as asking whether or not people agree that statistics are important, BSA 2016 also asked people whether they agree or disagree that:

- “It is important for an independent body, such as the UK Statistics Authority to ensure that official statistics are produced without political interference” and
- “It is important for an independent body such as the UK Statistics Authority to speak out publically against the misuse of official statistics”.

Among those who expressed a view, there was almost universal agreement that the UK Statistics Authority should play each of these roles (96% and 97% respectively).

“ There remains almost universal agreement that it is important for an independent body, like the UK Statistics Authority, to ensure official statistics are free from political interference and to speak out publically against misuse of official statistics. ”

Table 4.1 General attitudes to official statistics

	2014	2016	Significant change
Official statistics are generally accurate*	73%	78%	↑
Government presents official figures honestly when talking about its policies*	28%	26%	
Statistics produced by ONS are free from political interference*	66%	70%	
Newspapers present official figures honestly*	19%	18%	
Statistics produced by ONS are important for understanding our country*	90%	92%	
Official statistics should be made equally available to everybody, including the public, at the same time	71%	67%	↓

* Base excludes don't know and refusal responses

“ Among those expressing an opinion, the percentage of those who agree official figures are generally accurate has risen from 73% in 2014, to 78% in 2016. However, only 26% of those expressing an opinion agree that Government presents official figures honestly when talking about its policies. ”

's time to Complete **Census** Questions

on 1 - continued

For the remaining questions for your main job
not working, your last main job.
Your main job is the job in which you usually work
(worked) the most hours

For your main job, are (were) you:

an employee?

Self-employed or freelance without employees?

Self-employed with employees?

Is (was) your full and specific job title?

For example, manager, teacher, scientist, clerk,
mechanic, painter, electrician, computer programmer,
operator, etc.

39

40

5 Questions about specific sets of statistics

Key points

- Perceptions of the accuracy of official statistics vary quite widely depending on the specific statistical series in question – while 87% of those who express an opinion agree that the Census accurately reflects changes in the UK, just 71% said the same of crime statistics.
- Some statistics are more likely to be seen as subject to political interference than others – just 48% of those expressing an opinion agree crime figures are free of such interference, compared with 76% for the Census.
- Nearly a quarter of people have used the Census. Far fewer have used crime statistics (19%), employment statistics (16%), GDP (15%) or CPI (15%).

Do statistical series accurately reflect what is happening in the UK?

BSA 2016 included a number of questions about views of specific series of official statistics – the Census, the Consumer Price Index (described to respondents as “statistics on inflation”), employment and unemployment statistics, Gross Domestic Product or GDP, and crime statistics. Respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed that each of these statistical series accurately reflect what is changing in the UK. The results indicate that behind the general perceptions of the accuracy of official statistics, discussed in section 4, there are some important differences in the ways in which the public views specific

statistical series. While 78% of those who expressed an opinion agreed that “official figures are generally accurate”, for specific statistics this proportion ranges from 71% for crime statistics to 87% for the Census (Figure 8).

The proportion of people who were able to give a response to these questions also varied – 35% are not sure whether GDP figures accurately reflected change over time, compared with 20% who are not sure about the accuracy of crime statistics. The public are clearly more or less familiar with different statistical series.

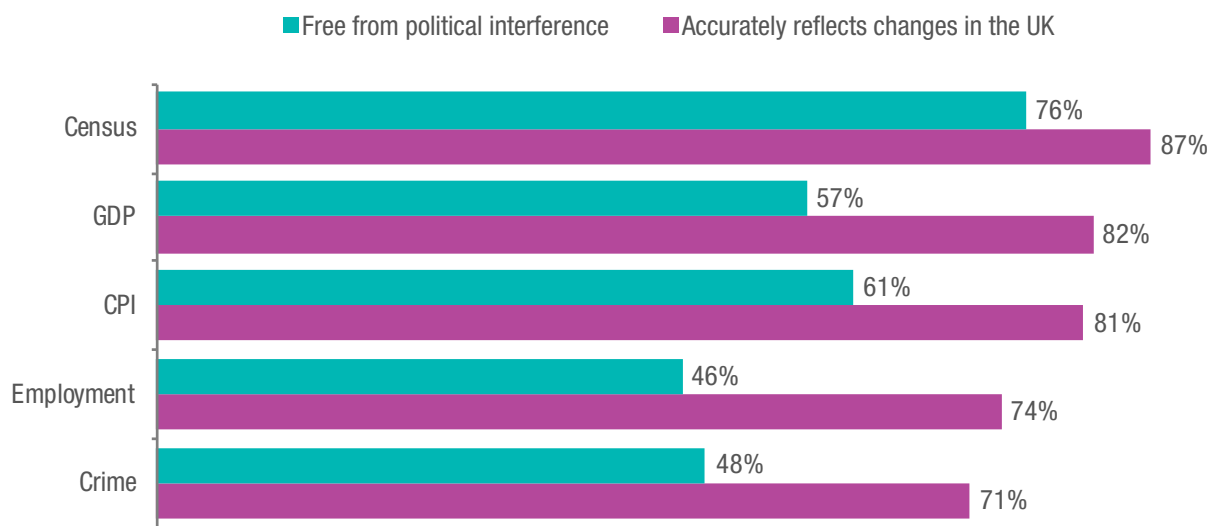
Are specific statistics free from political interference?

Findings on attitudes to specific statistics also suggest that behind the overall picture reported in section 4 there are some differences in beliefs about the extent to which particular official statistics may be subject to political interference. While two-thirds of those who expressed an opinion felt ONS figures in general are free from political interference, the proportion who felt that specific statistics are free from such interference ranged from just 46% for employment figures to 76% for the Census (Figure 8).

People also appear to be more sceptical about whether specific statistics are free from political interference than they are about their overall accuracy. For example, while 74% of those who expressed a view agree that employment figures accurately reflect changes in the UK, just 46% agree that they are free from political interference.

“ Perceptions of the accuracy of official statistics vary widely. While 87% of those who express a view agree that the Census accurately reflects changes in the UK, just 71% say the same of crime statistics. ”

Figure 8. Perceptions of accuracy and political interference by statistical series



Base: Excluding don't know and refusal responses

Figure 9. Public use of official statistical series



Base: All

The proportions of people who feel unable to comment on whether each statistical series is free from interference are similar to those saying they do not know whether they accurately reflect change over time.

Usefulness and timeliness of specific statistics

Respondents were also asked if they had used any of these specific official statistics. Those who had used each series were then asked to comment on their usefulness and timeliness.

The most commonly used data series was the Census – nearly a quarter (22%) had used it (Figure 9), with 15% having used it in the last five years. The vast majority of people (93%) who have used information from the Census agreed that it provides them with useful information.

Fewer people had ever used crime statistics (19%), employment statistics (16%), Gross Domestic Product (15%) and Consumer Price Index (15%). Users of GDP, CPI and crime data expressed similar views on the usefulness of the data to Census data users, with over 9 in 10 agreeing that these data series had provided them with useful information. Agreement that employment statistics were useful was slightly lower, with 86% of data users agreeing that they provided them with useful information.

Users of these four other data series are more likely than Census data users to agree that the data are released quickly. Around two-thirds of users of CPI (72%), GDP (67%), and employment statistics (67%) agree that these data are released quickly, compared with just under half of Census users (48%). Around six in ten (61%) of users of crime statistics feel they are released quickly.

“Some statistics are more likely to be seen as subject to political interference than others. Just 48% of those expressing a view agree crime figures are free of such interference, compared with 76% for the Census.”



6 Demographic differences

Key points

- People with a higher socio-economic status and with higher levels of education are more likely to have heard of ONS and to have used official statistics. They are more likely to trust ONS statistics and to be more positive about official statistics in general.
- While younger people are less likely than older people to have heard of ONS or to have taken part in the Census, they are more likely to trust ONS and to be positive about the statistics they produce.

Further analysis of the questions reported in sections 2 to 5 explored differences in attitudes to ONS and to official statistics by age, sex, socio-economic status,⁷ and level of education. Appendix A of the [technical report](#) that accompanies this report includes detailed tables showing breakdowns of questions by these respondent characteristics. This section summarises the key differences (Figures 10 and 11).

Gender

Men are a little more likely than women to have heard of ONS (77%/66%). Men are also more likely than women to have used official statistics (29%/21%). However, men and women's levels of trust in official statistics and their general attitudes to them are very similar, with the main difference being that women are generally somewhat more likely to answer "don't know" than men – a finding which is common to much social survey research.

Age

Younger people are less likely than older people to have heard of ONS – 51% of 18-24 year olds said they had heard of ONS prior to taking part in the survey, compared with 77% of those aged 65 and over.

Younger people are also less likely to recall having taken part in any ONS survey or the Census. Only 22% of 18-24 year-olds recalled taking part in the Census, compared with 73% of those aged 65 and over. Younger people are of course less likely to have yet taken the responsibility of completing a Census form on behalf of a household.

People at the older end of the age range are less likely to trust ONS, with 10% of those aged 65 and older distrusting it, compared to 4% of 18-24 year olds. This pattern is also evident in respect of trust in statistics produced by ONS. Younger respondents are also more likely to agree that official figures are generally accurate – 66% of those aged 18-24, compared with 62% of those aged 65 and older.

Socio-economic status and level of education

We know that socio-economic status and level of education are correlated and hence it is likely that, when looking at attitudes towards official statistics, we will see similar patterns for these two variables.

Awareness of ONS varies significantly by socio-economic status, along similar lines to 2014. 89% of those in managerial and professional occupations are aware of ONS,

⁷ As measured using a collapsed version of National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS-SEC), described in full on the ONS website - <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/classifications/current-standard-classifications/soc2010/soc2010-volume-3-ns-sec--rebased-on-soc2010--user-manual/index.html>

“ People with higher socio-economic status and higher levels of education are more likely to have heard of ONS and to have used official statistics. They are more likely to trust ONS statistics and to be more positive about official statistics in general. ”

compared with 53% of respondents in semi-routine and routine occupations. A similar trend can be seen in relation to level of education. 87% of those with a degree have heard of ONS compared with 52% of those with no qualifications.

These differences in awareness of ONS are also reflected in differences in recollection of participating in the Census (the ONS ‘survey’ people most commonly recall having taken part in). Those in managerial and professional occupations are more likely than those in routine and semi-routine occupations to recall taking part in the Census (72%/46%). Similarly, those with higher educational qualifications are more likely to recall taking part. Of those with degrees, 71% recall taking part, compared with 55% of those with no qualifications.

Use of official statistics is much higher amongst those in managerial and professional occupations (42%) and with degrees (52%), compared with those in routine and semi-routine occupations (11%) and with no qualifications (5%).

Trust in ONS statistics is higher among those in managerial and professional occupations than among those in routine and semi-routine occupations. In part this reflects the fact that those in routine and semi-routine occupations are more likely to say they “don’t know” whether they trust statistics produced by ONS. However, even when these respondents are excluded, trust appears higher among those in

managerial and professional occupations (89%, compared with 79% among those in routine and semi-routine occupations). The difference in trust between graduates and those with no qualifications is even more pronounced. Again, while this is partly explained by the higher proportion of those with no qualifications answering “don’t know”, the gap remains even when these respondents are excluded, with 92% of graduates compared with 70% of those with no qualifications saying they trust ONS statistics.

In terms of variations in general attitudes to ONS statistics by socio-economic class and education, in general those with higher levels of qualifications and in managerial and professional occupations are more positive than those with lower qualifications or in routine and semi-routine occupations. Some of this difference is explained by the fact that the latter groups were more likely to give “don’t know” responses for many of these questions. However, even after those respondents who were unable to express an opinion are excluded from the base, differences by class and education persist. For example:

- People with higher qualifications were more likely than those with lower or no qualifications to agree that official figures are generally accurate (82% of graduates compared with 40% of those with no qualifications). This difference is apparent even after the higher level of

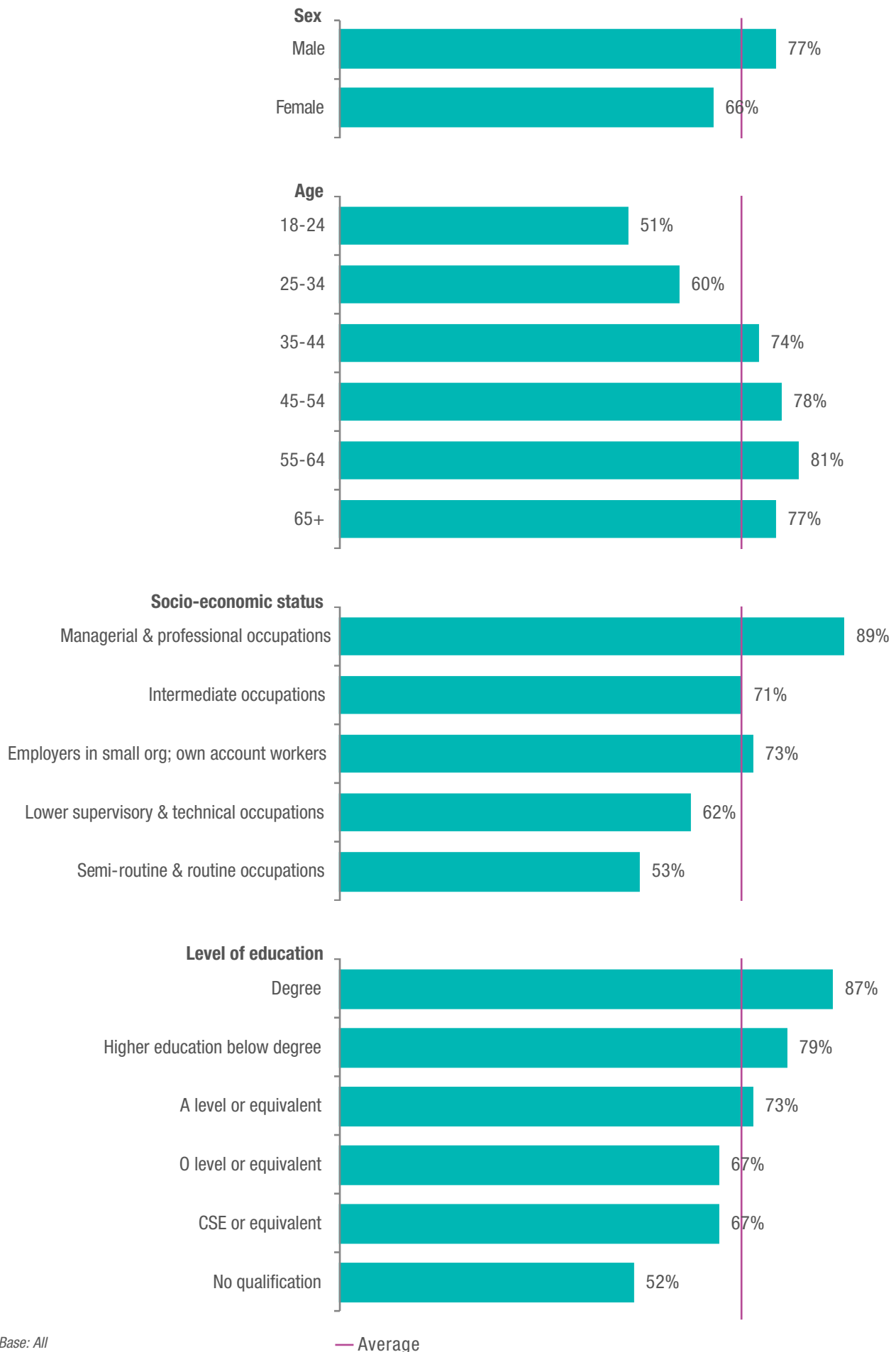
“don’t knows” among those with lower qualifications is taken into account (89% and 62% respectively).

- Those in managerial and professional occupations are similarly more likely than those in routine or semi-routine occupations to agree that official figures are generally accurate (74%/54%). Again, although this gap narrows when the higher proportion of “don’t know” responses among those in routine and semi-routine occupations is taken into account, it does not disappear (82%/71%).
- Those with higher educational qualifications and in managerial and professional occupations are more likely than those with low or no qualifications and those in routine and semi-routine occupations to agree that ONS statistics are free from political interference,

to agree that statistics are important for understanding our country, and to agree that it is important for the UK Statistics Authority to ensure that official statistics are produced without political interference. Again, although these gaps narrow when the higher proportion of people with no qualifications or in routine/semi-routine occupations giving “don’t know” responses are taken into account, they do not disappear. However it is important to note that the vast majority (84% or above) of those with no qualifications or in routine / semi-routine work, who express an opinion, think that statistics are important for understanding Britain and that it is important that the UK Statistics Authority ensures that official statistics are produced without political interference.

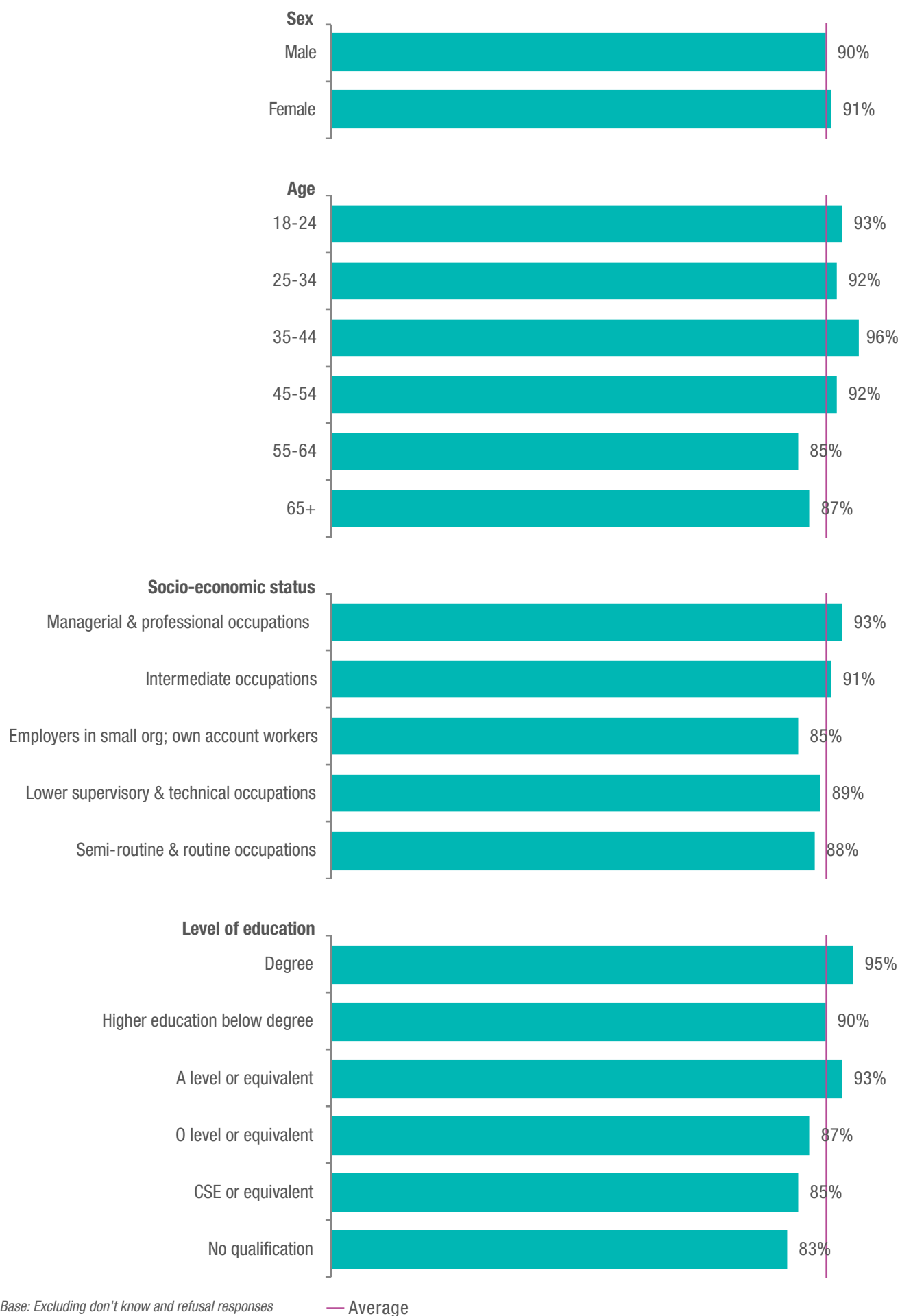
“ Younger people are less likely than older people to have heard of ONS. Only 51% of 18-24 year olds said they had heard of ONS, compared with 77% of those aged 65 and over. ”

Figure 10. Awareness of ONS by demographics



Base: All

Figure 11. Trust in ONS by demographics



NatCen Social Research

35 Northampton Square

London

EC1V 0AX

Tel. 020 7250 1866

Fax. 020 7250 1524

E-mail: info@natcen.ac.uk

www.natcen.ac.uk

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