

Activity Plan 2020

The Royal Statistical Society's vision is a world with data at the heart of understanding and decision making.



Introduction

The Society seeks to put data at the heart of understanding and decision-making through its six strategic goals. This activity plan details the planned work during 2020. In 2020, we will continue to be led by our current President - Deborah Ashby. We will, however, see a change of staff leadership with the recruitment of a new chief executive.

Our five-year strategy has a particular focus on member engagement and on developing our work around data science – we will continue pushing these areas of work forward.

In recent years we have taken a growing leadership role in thinking about effective and trustworthy use of data for the public good. This will continue to be an important theme of our external-facing work. We will work in partnership with a range of bodies to take this agenda forward.

2020 will be the 200th anniversary of Florence Nightingale, the first female fellow of the RSS, and we will be working with other organisations to mark this in a variety of ways.

Strategic Goal One

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.

1.1 Policy, research and campaigns

In 2020, we will again continue to promote the effective use of statistics and data, as well as the nurturing of a broader climate in which this can actually happen. Through our policy and public affairs activities, we will demonstrate, to policy-makers and others, the importance of statistics in society and articulate how they can help - for example, by acting on the policies outlined in our *Data Manifesto* and the recommendations contained in our responses to departmental and parliamentary consultation documents. We will continue working on previous priority areas including inflation measures, the ethics of data use and preparations for the 2021 census, as well as the bicentenary of Florence Nightingale's birth.

We will also strive to understand new and emerging issues and to develop a prominent and timely voice regarding developments of strategic interest to the Society and statistics.

Wherever possible, we will seek to reach out to members and involve them in our campaigns, consultation responses and policy-related events. We will also communicate clearly to ensure that RSS members are aware of the wide range of policy

activity that the Society undertakes on their behalf. Above all, policy achievements will be communicated quickly and effectively to members, to increase their awareness of the real and beneficial changes that the RSS, through their support, is bringing about.

Despite our limited resources, we will endeavour to ensure that our policy activity is not confined to Westminster and Whitehall but covers other parts of the UK and, ideally, other countries in which RSS has a substantial number of members.

Where appropriate, we will also seek to add our support, and voice, to international campaigns in defence of statisticians who are being subjected to unfair political pressures.

The Society's Honorary Officer for Statistics and the National Statistics Advisory Group (NSAG) will maintain a regular liaison with the UK Statistics Authority (UKSA) and the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and work to strengthen official statistics. The NSAG will work with staff to develop the Society's policy views on official statistics matters. Likely themes and issues for 2020 include inflation measurement, implementation of the PACAC select committee recommendations, user engagement, missing data and preparation for the census.

We will continue to play a leading role in the Economic Statistics Working Group (ESWG), which brings RSS together with the ONS, the Royal Economic Society, the Economic Statistics Centre of Excellence (ESCoE) and the Society of Professional Economists.

1.2 Public affairs, press, external-facing events

We will continue to initiate, maintain and build relationships with key actors in the policy and communication spheres, as part of our public affairs work. We will engage in a range of public affairs activities to help expand our influence, enact our policy agendas and build stronger links with relevant decision-makers and opinion-formers. We will hold roundtables, arrange or participate in Parliamentary events, and engage in other policy-influencing activities throughout the year - as well inviting targeted political figures to our Statistical Excellence Awards Ceremony (summer) and annual President's Dinner (winter).

2020 is the 200th anniversary of the birth of our first female fellow, Florence Nightingale. We will mark this important anniversary throughout the year, including through our President giving the Florence Nightingale Lecture in Oxford in March.

We will aim to hold 3 or 4 major public events during the year with a significant keynote speaker or panel on a topic of public interest.

Our public affairs work will be driven largely by our policy, research and campaigns work: for example, our consultation responses often create opportunities for follow-up letters and meetings with relevant MPs/Peers.

We will continue to identify and exploit a wide range of opportunities to secure positive media coverage for the Society. We will expand the RSS's media presence through supporting the RSS Statistical Ambassadors in their media work. This will include spokesperson opportunities with the media and through workshops, as well as Ambassadors supporting the media in their statistical work.

We will continue to build on the success of our public engagement initiative Statistics of the Year, which has tended to secure considerable media interest at the end of the year. In 2020 we will consider a new category of Sports Statistic of the Year.

We will remain committed to supporting members of the media in their statistical work and continue to liaise with the ONS about the potential organisation of additional communication-of-statistics workshops for senior civil servants. This will sustain our position as an authority of honest and ethical statistics communication.

1.3 Awards for statistical excellence

Our awards for statistical excellence will continue across existing categories for pharmaceutical statistics with PSI, official statistics with the UK Statistics Authority, journalism with ESRC and early-career writing with Significance Magazine. We have launched a new health statistics award for 2020 - 'The Florence Nightingale Award for Excellence in Healthcare Data Analytics' - in association with the Health Foundation. In 2020 we will hold the Awards ceremony in May to coincide with the 200th anniversary of Florence Nightingale's birth.

1.4 African Institute for Mathematical Sciences

We will continue to encourage RSS members to volunteer as lecturers and tutors for AIMS courses at the various AIMS centres in Africa. We will provide financial support through our partnership with Taylor and Francis and the American Statistical Association, to enable three RSS fellows to travel. The AIMS committee will continue to oversee the programme, develop our partnership with AIMS Cameroon and look for ways to introduce and deliver the AIMS syllabus at other AIMS centres. Additional support of the AIMS committee will be provided through the recruitment of suitable supervisors and dissertation projects. We will also work proactively to identify any new areas within the scope of our partnership where we can make a positive contribution. Our partnership with Taylor and Francis comes to an end in 2020 and we will seek new supporters for this work.

1.5 Statisticians for Society

The Society has been awarded funding by the National Lottery to continue our Statisticians for Society programme for a further five years. Therefore, we will continue to help link small charities to statisticians who will give them pro bono support. In 2020 we will look to grow the initiative, seeking opportunities to promote the initiative widely

and encourage charities to apply for support. We will organise live drop in sessions, webinars and other outreach activities in the local regions to reach out to small charities. More details of this are in section 5.2.

The Scoping Committee will continue to oversee the review of pro bono projects and selection of volunteers to work with charities. The newly formed Review Panel will continue to review the work done by our volunteers to ensure it meets the charity's needs.

We will also encourage RSS fellows to volunteer as trustees on charity boards through our partnership with Reach Volunteering. We will continue working closely with Pro Bono Economics, Operational Research Society and DataKind UK to match our volunteers to opportunities that arise through them. We will signpost to other volunteering opportunities, including with partners such as Statistics without Borders.

Strategic Goal Two

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.

2.1 Our approach

Our education, statistical literacy and public engagement activities emphasise the value of statistical literacy for all in everyday life, the need to increase statistical literacy in employment, the role that statistics can play as part of public culture, and the benefit of public engagement with the development of statistics and statistical techniques and tools.

We deliver this through supporting the work of key stakeholders, influencing policy, providing direct activities and, crucially, helping our members' efforts to support education, statistical literacy and public engagement.

Our activities particularly focus on helping the UK school system to improve the teaching and learning of statistics and data in the curriculum, as well as helping other stakeholders improve their statistical literacy. During 2020 we will have a new education strategy in order to use our relatively small resources in a more focused way, and to find projects capable of external funding.

2.2 In society

Our activities highlight the value of number skills and data skills for all. Our *Data Manifesto* champions the importance of education and skills for the data economy. We will continue our education policy work (*see below*) and will also continue to engage with organisations such as National Numeracy and the British Academy to highlight the need for statistical literacy as part of the numeracy and functional skills agendas.

We will continue to raise awareness of the value and importance of statistics, and the increasing demand and supply of statistical information in public life – in the media, in leisure, and in wider culture.

2.3 In key professions

Our activity in increasing statistical literacy in employment has long focused on professions where improvements will have wider public benefit: parliamentarians and policy-makers, journalists, voluntary sectors, education and the law. We will continue to work to address both the short-term immediate need and to seek longer-term ways of creating institutional or structural change.

We will continue our work encouraging statistical literacy in policy-making within the Westminster Parliament and the UK civil service - as well as, if possible, in the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly. This will include working to raise statistics' profile in various policy areas, encouraging evidence-informed policy-making and (if resources allow) encouraging or assisting in the provision of high-quality training. We will always seek to work in partnership with like-minded stakeholders such as the House of Commons Library, POST and Sense about Science.

We intend that statistical literacy in the media (including advertising and public relations) should be a key focus for us in 2020. Our previous efforts to improve understanding of numbers and data in the media have included a wide-reaching Science Journalism Training Programme and successfully influencing improvements in editorial standards at the BBC.

In 2020, we will maintain both free online courses for journalists on science and statistics (although these need to be updated when resources permit) and a network of volunteers who could deliver in-house training to journalists and journalism students. Our Statistical Excellence in Journalism awards will again provide recognition for the best work. We will continue to support and promote the Science Media Centre's 'Before the Headlines' service, to help journalists understand the statistical elements of scientific and medical stories. More generally, we will seek to develop the skills of our fellows in their interactions with the media (*see section 2.5*).

Our Statistics and the Law Section works to improve the understanding and use of statistics in the administration of justice.

Our Statisticians for Society programme helps our members to share their skills and expertise with third sector organisations.

2.4 In education: policy and practice

We need an education system that equips everyone with the skills, knowledge and experience to explore, understand and interpret statistics and data. We envisage a future with increasing focus and content on number and data skills in teaching practice and assessment across the curricula. This is essential to meet the needs of individual learners, employers and the economy.

In the Society's *Data Manifesto*, we foresee data as a key driver of prosperity. As part of this vision, to prepare for the data economy and to upskill the nation, we call upon data handling and quantitative skills to be integral parts of the taught curriculum.

While the theory of statistics is deeply rooted in mathematics, particularly understanding probability, statistics is relevant across a wide range of subjects and informs a wider understanding of data.

We will continue to work to influence subjects such as statistics and mathematics, and an ever-increasing range of subjects across the sciences, humanities and social sciences that involve number and data skills. We emphasise that statistics is both a process and a way of thinking, which should be reflected in teaching practice and students' understanding. Advances in data science, and how that should influence the curriculum, were highlighted by Sir Adrian Smith in his 2017 review of mathematical education in England post-16, which we welcomed.

Whilst we focus on UK education, our policy principles and some of our practical support work, such as our e-teacher membership and resources for members are applicable and accessible worldwide.

Our school-age policy work will continue to advocate for the role of statistics and data within subject disciplines, and the need for this to be properly supported, with examination and assessment systems that are fit for purpose.

In England, we are working closely with the Royal Society's Advisory Committee on Mathematics Education (ACME) and support its four contact groups, on mathematical education in primary, early secondary, A level, and post-16 alternative pathways in mathematical skills. We will also work with the Royal Society, the Joint Mathematical Council (JMC) and other partners to advocate for appropriate pathways for participation in the teaching, learning and assessment of statistics and data. We will respond to important policy consultations issued by government, Parliament and teaching bodies as they arise. We will also continue to monitor and influence the delivery and implementation of the curriculum, both within mathematics and statistics, and in other subjects. In addition, we will monitor developments in adult education and apprenticeships, working in partnership with bodies such as the Data Skills Taskforce.

We will support fellows to work in similar ways in Wales and Scotland, and will seek to respond to education policy consultations from the Scottish and Welsh governments as resources allow.

We offer a free e-teacher membership for teachers in primary and secondary schools, with benefits including online access to *Significance* magazine, RSS email newsletters, and RSS e-teacher bulletins. In 2020, we will consider further opportunities to engage with our e-teacher members. We will draw on the skills and knowledge within the e-teacher network. We will continue to promote our existing resources for teachers and will develop and provide further resources if opportunities arise. We will continue to support and publicise the Mathematics Teacher Training Scholarships scheme, to support early-career mathematics teachers in England.

We will continue to help our fellows to engage with young people, in order to benefit statistical education and careers promotion (see section 3.6). Many fellows already volunteer their time to support teaching and learning in schools and we want to encourage more fellows to do so. In 2020, we will continue to support our William Guy Lecturer, to deliver a series of lectures to schools and communities. We will also work with partners such as Health Data Research UK to create a set of Florence Nightingale lecturers. We will offer support to fellows engaged in existing programmes with a wide reach, including the STEM Ambassadors programme, Nuffield Research Placements Scheme, the Royal Institution's Mathematics Masterclasses, and Inspiring the Future (see section 3.6). This support for our members will include activities arranged with our Young Statisticians' Section, and our resources such as "Hands-on Statistics."

In higher education, our Academic Affairs Advisory Group (AAAG) and our Professional Affairs Committee (PAC) have responsibility for statistics pathways leading to Chartered Statistician status. We also take an interest in quantitative skills in a range of other subjects in the social sciences, humanities, and science and engineering. We will continue to work with the British Academy-hosted High-Level Strategy Group for Quantitative Skills (in whatever form this takes). With volunteer input and the launch of the Society's Teaching Statistics Special Interest Group, we anticipate that teaching statistics to non-statistics undergraduate students will be a regular theme for discussion at RSS conferences and other RSS forums.

We will work to raise students' awareness of the value of studying statistics, at school and university level, through careers promotion work (see section 3.6), advocating for teaching of statistics across the curriculum in schools, and wider statistical literacy work emphasising the importance of statistics in home and professional life.

2.5 Public engagement and outreach

It is important for the statistical community to engage with wider society on issues relating to statistics and data. Firstly, to raise the profile of statistics to help people

understand the value of statistics and their own statistical skills at home, as citizens and in employment. Secondly, to motivate people to consider a career working with statistics and data. Thirdly, to recognise and respond to the needs of ordinary or 'citizen' users and wider society and, fourthly, to acknowledge and respond to the social and societal impact of developments in statistics (such as privacy). We will continue to advocate the importance of these approaches to our membership and the wider statistical community. We support fellows to engage with the media and directly with public audiences by providing resources and professional development activities, including professional development sessions at the RSS conference, and by encouraging participation in partner projects.

We will continue to help our fellows to engage with young people, in order to benefit statistical education and careers promotion, as detailed above. Our local groups will be encouraged to organise events for young people, in partnership with local festivals, celebratory occasions and initiatives (such as Maths Week), the RSS William Guy Lecturer, and for public audiences.

Our activities that directly engage with wider audiences include public events, *Significance* magazine and initiatives such as Statistics of the Year.

2.6 Significance magazine

We will produce six print issues of *Significance*, in partnership with the American Statistical Association and our publisher, Wiley.

We will review our online offering to ensure our website is fit for purpose: that it supports and complements the magazine, incorporates more multimedia and interactive elements to drive reader engagement, and is manageable and sustainable given limited staff resource.

We will conduct a design refresh of the print magazine and website, refining and updating layouts, fonts, sections and general look and feel, to ensure the magazine remains fresh, modern-looking and approachable.

We will continue to investigate costed options for moving to greener packaging for the distribution of *Significance* in line with the general RSS policy of trying, in 2020, to reduce the environmental impact of the Society's activities.

We will pursue opportunities to further promote the *Significance* brand through partnerships with other media outlets, whether specialist or general.

We will seek to increase the circulation of *Significance* to non-RSS members through targeted marketing strategies and will continue to promote a partnership package to allow other societies to offer *Significance* subscriptions to their members at a reduced cost.

We will look to develop the *Significance* commercial proposition by creating opportunities for organisations to support the print magazine and website through advertising and sponsorship.

The *Significance* editorial board will continue its efforts to better reflect the geographic and demographic diversity of the RSS membership through targeted appointments of new board members.

We will hold a *Significance* reception at the Joint Statistical Meetings and a *Significance* event at the RSS Conference.

Significance will work with RSS and ASA colleagues to develop coverage and content to support celebrations of Florence Nightingale's bicentenary.

Strategic Goal Three

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.

3.1 Strategy

We will continue to deliver the ongoing management and promotion of our professional awards and will implement strategies to encourage existing and non-members to apply for professional status. A continued emphasis will be placed on marketing the new competency-based route for Chartered Statistician, whilst completing the review of our GradStat award, the accreditation process for universities and defining what it means to be a modern-day Graduate Statistician, building on our review work, stakeholder and Conference events in 2019.

3.2 Professional Membership

The revalidation process for Chartered Statisticians will run as in previous years, with between 40-50 members due to submit their CPD records for assessment in 2020. However, there will be a review of this process to recognise personnel changes and the inclusion of those Chartered members losing their Chartered Scientist status, which is why the number of individuals is higher than previous years.

We hope to create new interactive sessions aimed at developing the statistician whilst using it as a platform for new member welcome events and possible roadshows.

All GradStat holders will continue to hold this title for a maximum of 10 years from the 1st January 2019 or the date it was awarded if after this date.

We aim to introduce a new category of professional membership, titled Data Analyst in 2020. As well as introducing a competency-based route for applying to GradStat. All changes and implementations are based on the Professional Affairs Committee review of accreditation standards which will include a new form of accreditation titled the RSS Quality Mark.

3.3 Accreditation

In April 2017, we launched a new RSS accreditation scheme for Honours and Master's degree programmes. In 2019 the Professional Affairs Committee began a review of the standards for both universities and potential applicants of GradStat to ensure best practice is reflected, as well as representing what it means to be a modern-day Graduate Statistician.

The RSS Professional Affairs Committee have developed an approach to accredit universities and institutes on a modular basis that will determine the level of accreditation awarded. Full accreditation will enable qualifying students to apply directly for GradStat. Whilst modular accreditation only will be titled the RSS Quality Mark and allow qualifiers to work towards our professional membership offerings, including the new the Data Analyst.

3.4 Training and professional development

In 2020, we will continue to focus on improving the profitability of our training offering of face-to-face, public and commissioned courses. We will be actively promoting our expanded online course offering. We will be looking to continue our partnerships with Manchester University and Jumping Rivers to run courses outside of London.

Our ongoing strategy is to deliver professional-level courses for our members and academics while offering courses for non-statisticians by both subject and industry with learning pathways to help guide non-members. To this end, we will be looking at expand our marketing of the courses through the use of the RSS' digital channels and social media. We will look to increase and improve the marketing materials we use and investigate new marketing opportunities.

3.5 Data Science

The RSS sections on Data Science and Statistical Computing, and special interest groups for Data Ethics and Women in Data Science and Statistics will play an important role in engaging with the data science community on a number of issues including machine learning. We will provide support as these RSS groups look to develop activities and their programme of meetings in these key areas.

3.6 Careers

We encourage entry to a range of statistical and data careers. High-quality information to school pupils and career changers is available on our website, and through printed materials. We work with Inspiring the Future and the STEM Ambassadors programme to link fellows with school teachers and students. We will continue to provide resources and guidance for fellows to support them to deliver careers activities at schools and careers fairs across the UK.

Strategic Goal Four

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.

4.1 Academic affairs

Through the Academic Affairs Advisory Group, we will continue to promote funding for research into statistics and the wider cross-discipline subjects. This includes looking at future frameworks. We are hoping to look at the potential for further international collaboration for research. This is increasingly important in light of Brexit and its potential impact on existing EU collaborative partnerships.

We will continue to work with the Council for the Mathematical Sciences, in partnership, to liaise with research funding bodies about research funding for mathematical sciences including statistics.

The RSS will also work with UKRI to help them consider how to improve the assessment of data driven research, and the statistical skills in the research system.

4.2 Journals

We will edit and produce four issues of Series A, five issues of Series B and five issues of Series C (more than 4000 pages, including as many papers with paid-for open access as become available). To increase impact, the journals will continue to produce special issues within series and themed on-line ‘virtual’ issues across the series.

We will continue to strive to minimise the times between submission of manuscripts and decisions to their authors. To do this we will make best use of the journal on-line submission and peer review system and provide administrative support for Editors, Associate Editors and referees as required. On acceptance of papers, we will strive to maintain the very rapid times to early on-line publication that have been established in recent years.

The Discussion Meetings Committee will continue its work to develop the programme of single-paper and extended discussion meetings, drawing on the inspiration of its Section representatives for timely and interesting topics. As many papers presented at such Discussion Meetings will be published in the three journal series as may be available.

The journals provide the RSS with income that we use to cross-subsidise the Society's activities. The finances of the current contract with Wiley give the RSS some certainty of income for the period 2017–2022 through the annual guaranteed payments. However, 'open access' mandates from research funders are becoming more widespread and continued reductions in institutional library budgets throughout the world are putting increasing pressure on which journals to renew and therefore on the total income from the Society's publications, as well as the uncertainties of currency exchange rate fluctuations. The RSS will therefore continue to review with the publisher the evolving subscription licences and deals and the use of technologies to add value to existing content to generate income. In particular, we will keep under review the decline in printed journals for institutions to determine when they cease to yield adequate overall revenue, and whether instead we can increase the number of quality papers that we can publish solely on line.

To meet such challenges and to maintain the series as top flight journals, the Editorial Panels are revising the aims and scope of their series to highlight their intention to establish a high profile in emerging areas such as 'data science' as well as developing existing areas to increase output progressively in the next few years.

The publisher's promotional and marketing strategies are aimed particularly at the emerging economies, and we will collaborate with them in their campaigns and on other ideas discussed in a strategy meeting with Wiley in 2018. In particular, we will carefully monitor the trend in international open access policies and the data provided from the application and usage of the new technologies being developed on Wiley's new Web platform launched in 2018.

On the wider question of access to data and 'big data' initiatives, the publications will continue to be involved in strategies for influencing policy and decision making in areas such as privacy, data sharing, data ethics and training.

We will continue with our popular virtual Journal Webinar programme of events.

4.3 Conference and events

Our annual international conference will take place in Bournemouth in September 2020. The aim is to build on the record attendances in 2017 and 2018. For the second year running the venue will be a dedicated conference centre which provides capacity to further increase overall attendance and to grow income from sponsors and exhibitors, with the goal of once again generating a small surplus over total (direct and indirect)

costs for the conference. We will continue the fully-streamed format which has proved highly successful but will use feedback to keep the programme content fresh and innovate where appropriate.

We will undertake planning for our 2021 and 2022 Conferences - in Manchester and Aberdeen respectively - and continue work on sourcing venues for 2023 and beyond which will enable continued conference growth.

We remain committed to developing the programme of half-day and evening events on topical issues in conjunction with our committees of volunteers. We will continue to explore event partnerships to promote the Society to wider audiences and also extend our geographical presence beyond London. This will include consideration of moving keynote events to other locations in the UK.

2020 marks the bicentenary of Florence Nightingale's birth and the Society will be actively contributing to activities marking the anniversary, including events both at Errol Street and around the country.

We will look to further develop content-sharing from events, including video and livestreaming, with the aim of providing premium content for fellows, generating income from non-fellows and providing a better service to our non UK-based members.

4.4 Honours

We presented our 2019 medals and prizes at the RSS international conference in Belfast in September. We are seeking fresh nominations for the 2020 awards, which will be presented at the Society's conference in September 2020.

The honours up for award in 2020 are the: Guy Medals in Gold, Silver and Bronze, Honorary Fellowship, Chambers Medal, Frances Wood Medal, Research Prize and Barnett Award.

We will seek to increase the number of nominations, particularly in the junior categories and actively encourage diversity in those being nominated.

4.5 Sections and Special Interest Groups

Sections and Special Interest Groups will continue to hold topical meetings to support learning and development, and implementation of statistical methodology. Staff will work with Section and Local Group officers to grow income from meetings and to deliver further membership benefits through defined discounts for fellows.

We will again encourage sections to consider how they might respond to public interest issues in their area of expertise. In 2020, sections will update their remit documents and we will encourage them to include activities that will contribute to the Society's strategic goals in addition to their programme of meetings.

We will continue to work towards the smoother running of sections and groups. The introduction of the new database and integrated website will enable committees to engage better with members and supporters, and we will provide support for committees as they prepare to use the new system.

We will encourage sharing of good practice through the biannual meetings of section and local group officers, induction webinars for new officers, developing resources and supporting Council section representatives in their role.

We will continue to encourage the creation of Special Interest Groups in key areas not currently covered by existing Sections.

In 2020 the Oversight Committee for RSS 18404 will look to continue to expand wider knowledge of the Sector Scheme in Industry. The committee will look to increase its number of international partners to promote the scheme overseas. They also wish to support companies and individuals by offering public and in-company assessment centres.

4.6 Archive

A number of Florence Nightingale-related items from our archive may go out, on loan, during 2020 to carefully-selected institutions which can display them more effectively and professionally, and to larger audiences, than is possible at Errol Street.

Strategic Goal Five

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.

5.1 Membership strategy: promoting member engagement opportunities, member retention, communications and recruitment

In 2020 we will continue implementing the membership and professional affairs strategy and work plan. The primary focus of the revised plan is on engaging members to help achieve the Society's strategic goals. The key areas of work for the team will focus on research, engagement, recruitment, retention, communications and promoting professional affairs and accreditation.

The focus across all areas of membership during 2020 will be to maximise the opportunities and benefits delivered by the implementation of the new CRM/CMS project (early 2020). These enhanced systems will have a significant impact on the

resources required to deliver membership administration and we will carry out a review of the membership strategic objectives in light of the new processes.

Member engagement

As a member-led organisation, the RSS draws heavily on volunteer efforts from our members to increase the scope and scale of our public benefit.

We will continue to grow engagement with our members as volunteers in our work through a wide range of opportunities, including serving on Council (our Trustee body), in Local Groups, Sections and other working groups.

We will strengthen our Sections and Local Groups, and empower them to undertake activities that promote our goals and attract new members within the UK and across the world.

We will also maintain Statisticians for Society and AIMS initiatives and will continue to seek ways to substantially increase the involvement and interaction of members by making it easier to volunteer with the RSS. For more details, please see sections 1.4 and 1.5 above.

We will continue to profile our existing engaged members to demonstrate and recognise the impact and value they bring to the RSS.

Member retention

We will continue to review the member benefits offer and consider which should be exclusive to members only and which, if any, should be available on a 'taster' basis or behind a pay wall - ensuring the exclusivity is clearly communicated to members to strengthen the value proposition. We will also continue interrogating the exit survey results to review the membership product and to ensure improved retention rates in the future.

Members will continue to receive a letter and welcome pack upon joining, as well as a series of automated email messages introducing them to various member benefits and ways to get involved with the Society. We will also develop our programme of new member welcome events, to give first-year members an overview of RSS activities and ways to get involved, and to foster a sense of belonging.

We aim to implement a sponsorship programme for members in financial difficulty (enabling other members to donate to this programme to fund those unable to fund themselves).

We will continue our renewals communications to members, with a series of automated messages: starting with a pre-renewal call to members to update their details, and a message from the President reminding them of what their support has helped the

Society to achieve, followed by the initial request for payment and a series of reminders thereafter. We will continue to highlight and promote the charitable work of the Society, to demonstrate the good work that members support through their membership.

We aim to make use of the new CRM to remind members which services and benefits they have utilised throughout the year, and to highlight any other benefits they may be missing. We will also use 'danger times' research to identify members at risk of not renewing and target pre-emptive communications, addressing specific concerns and reiterating relevant benefits of membership.

We plan to acknowledge and reward long service for fellows, for example sending a letter or certificate after 5/10/20, etc, years of membership. We already offer free membership to those who have been fellows for more than 60 years, but it is obviously important to acknowledge significant milestones before this, too.

Communications

As well as the automated emails to new and renewing members, the fortnightly member e-newsletter will continue to be supplemented by a bimonthly 'events special' and six conference emails per year. The thrice-yearly e-Teacher newsletter has been added to the list of formatted, branded emails specifically aimed at a part of the membership. The new print newsletter, *Member Update*, will continue to be sent to fellows three times a year, with every other issue of *Significance*.

Member newsletters generally link back to news and events content on the main website, which is continually updated to reflect the Society's ongoing activities.

The Society also uses Twitter to promote these activities and to a lesser extent, Facebook and LinkedIn.

At present the Society's social media accounts, its newsletters and its website are managed and overseen by a part-time web editor and two web & digital officers - one of whom holds a fixed-term post to support the CRM project's implementation. Once the new website and CRM are in place, we will need to review the situation and there may be a need to increase our staff resources in this area. However, we are confident that the new CRM system will also reduce the amount of manual inputting required by RSS staff, so any increase in communications / social media / website staffing should be offset by reductions elsewhere.

We will continue to promote the benefits of membership to members, with targeted communications to those in the first year of membership, and the development of a new membership benefits booklet for all members. Individual benefits will continue to be highlighted in *Member Update*.

We will use the new CRM to drive more personalised content, highlighting events, news stories, etc, of relevance to individual members, based on their preferences, interests and past activity.

Recruitment

In 2020 we will continue to develop and implement campaigns to recruit new members into the Society. The new CRM and introduction of anniversary renewals will enable us to better identify target audiences and create time-limited offers around membership, which complement other Society activities. We will also introduce a new automated onboarding campaign for new members, which will provide regular email updates on the benefits of RSS membership. The campaign will be tailored to each membership category and will encourage greater involvement in our activities.

The introduction of online joining and anniversary renewals for corporate partners will allow us to target organisations throughout the year. We will focus more on attracting companies in the private sector, updating our marketing and communications to highlight the benefits of membership to them. We will also work with our existing corporate partners to encourage continued update of RSS membership among their employees.

We will continue to work with established contacts and identify new contacts in universities to promote e-Student membership. With the introduction of the new CRM system and website, we will develop an online e-Student community where students can connect with each other, ask questions, and tackle statistical problems together. We will continue to run our annual upgrade campaign for e-Student members to encourage them to become fellows and apply for GradStat status.

We will look to hold another Members' Week in October building on the first one held in 2018. This will include events and a dedicated marketing campaign, which highlights our activities and services and encourage our members to get involved and non-members to join.

5.2 Local groups

We will maintain our programme of work with Local Groups to organise meetings across all areas of statistics that are attractive to a wide range of individuals and support their engagement with potential new members.

In 2020, we will look to increase our support for Local Groups and assist them in engaging with the RSS and the wider membership. The new database and website will enable local group to better engage with local RSS members and the wider community and we will ensure that they have adequate support as they familiarise themselves with the new system.

We will support fellows in creating Local Groups in regions not currently represented by active local groups.

Strategic Goal Six

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.

6.1 Budgets

The planned budget for 2020, which covers this Activity Plan, is projected to be a break even budget.

During 2020 the Senior Management Team will begin implementation of a 5 year Finance Strategy to ensure the medium term future of the Society is secured.

6.2 Investments

The Society's investments will continue to be managed by Schroeders, and overseen by the Audit & Risk Committee. The RSS Council has agreed to seek out 'positive investments' in e.g. sustainable energy, and the Audit and Risk Committee will seek opportunities for this.

6.3 Funding, business development, marketing

Active consideration will be given to developing and launching a legacy giving initiative (although, inevitably, this investment may take many years to come to fruition).

6.4 Building

In 2018 a proposed long term (3 year) lease of the letting areas in the building did not materialise. During 2018/19 the letting areas of the building were extensively refurbished in order to restart the venue hire operations (see below).

During 2019 a study was carried out as to the future prospects for the Errol Street offices. This paper recommended that the society retains its operations in the current offices and the remaining parts of the offices are refurbished over a period of time into 2020.

The building works on the YMCA building should complete in early 2020. The works to Finsbury Tower will carry on through 2020 and into 2021. Disturbance will be minimal but potential venue hire clients may be put off by the proximity of the building works.

6.5 Venue hire

With the withdrawal of the long-term tenants mentioned above and coupled with the refurbishment of the letting areas we intend to build on the venue hire operations that were started in 2019.

A restructuring within the operations team has meant that greater resource is being applied to this area. We plan to expand our marketing effort to promote our venue to maximise the external hiring opportunities. However, this must be balanced alongside other Society meetings, training and internal staff meetings.

6.6 Information technology

The RSS will complete a major programme of change around the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system to deliver vast improvements for both members and staff. We will completely move away from legacy IT systems as existing contracts come to an end in 2020. This will result in ongoing savings, improved data security and efficiency. GDPR access requests will be much easier to process.

Decreasing market costs for fibre internet will allow us to upgrade from 100Mbit/s to 1000Mbit/s. This will provide a significant performance boost to a range of IT infrastructure and cloud services.

Skype for Business will be migrated to Microsoft Teams.

Our on-premise servers will be upgraded to a newer operating system and then migrated to the cloud. The existing data backup and recovery contract will be cancelled. External IT support for servers will either be completely reconfigured or cancelled depending on the number and skill-set of internal IT staff.

We will make greater use of business intelligence to understand the needs of our members and the working patterns of staff.

The new website will have had a complete re-edit and overhaul to make it much more user-friendly and responsive, especially on mobile devices such as phones and tablets.

We will continue to improve the experience of members using our website by offering increased personalisation based on their member type, location, interests etc.

Once the new CRM and website are bedded in, staff will carry out a review of how well these new interfaces are working and what amendments are needed, taking on board feedback from users.

6.7 Staffing, human resources, benefits, pensions

Staffing currently stands at around 29 full-time equivalent posts. During 2020, we expect to release the member who was on a fixed term basis to support the CRM project implementation. We do not expect significant changes in staffing during 2020.

There will be a change in the RSS Executive Director as Hetan Shah leaves post after 8 years at the end of January 2020. The RSS will seek a new CEO in early 2020, and in the meantime Nicola Emmerson will take on the role of Interim Executive Director.

We will continue to invest in the skills of staff through training and development, via external courses and other mechanisms. In addition, we continue to invest in the health and wellbeing of staff through activities such as a series of resilience workshops and activity classes.

Our staff handbook and associated policies continue to be reviewed on an annual basis.

The Society's final salary pension scheme is closed, but it has a deficit which the Society will meet in a sustainably planned way.

6.8 Governance

The RSS will modernise all of its governance documents: Charter, Bylaws and Regulations in 2020. There will be little substantive change, but the documentation will move to being more principles based, and in line with modern good practice. This will require working with the Privy Council and having the changes approved by the RSS fellowship.

The Society's main governance committees will meet as scheduled in 2020. We expect three Council meetings, three Executive Committee meetings, and two Audit & Risk Committee meetings. The Directors of our trading subsidiary RSS (Services) Ltd. will meet twice.

We will produce a short note of our annual achievements to highlight the successes of the Society in a stimulating and accessible way.

Elections to Council will take place through electronic ballot.

6.9 Management information

The RSS Council now reviews a management information dashboard at each of its meetings. The Senior Management Team meets weekly, and regularly reviews management information as appropriate – e.g. monthly budget projections; monthly membership numbers etc.

The new CRM system will enable the teams to produce more timely and more detailed management information in 2020 which will enhance the decision making processes within the organisation.

6.10 Diversity

The Society's Diversity & Inclusion Working Group will continue its work programme by monitoring the implementation of the Society's high-level diversity and inclusion policy; ensuring RSS staff, volunteers, members and the wider statistical community are aware of the policy and are actively embedding it within their work; and reviewing the analysis of member data on diversity and inclusion.

6.11 RSS Green Group

The RSS Green Group - a working group of staff members - was set up in 2018 to look at how the Society can improve its operational processes to become more environmentally friendly and it will continue with this work in 2020.