

Activity Plan 2021

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 plan details the work which is scheduled to take place during 2021.

Our five-year strategy, which is set to run from 2018 to 2022, has a focus on member engagement, on developing our work around data science, and on the effective and trustworthy use of data for the public good. We will continue pushing these areas of work forward. We will work with carefully chosen partners to support our agenda.

Our work in the coming year will be significantly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic: in part because statistics and data have a vital role to play in society's response to the crisis, in part because the pandemic will continue to have a direct effect on our operations, and partly because it will usher in broader changes to which we will need to respond.

These changes, combined with the beginning of the term of office of our new President, Sylvia Richardson, in January mean that we will be refreshing some aspects of the strategy in the first half of the year. We will also be examining some aspects of the 2021 work-plan over the coming months to ensure our activities are well prioritized to achieve the greatest possible impact. Where we expect aspects of our work to be reviewed in-year, these are discussed in box-outs in the plan that follows.

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

From November to January, we will carry out a prioritisation exercise to identify where our policy campaigning efforts should be focused, building on our historical work. We will seek to ensure that our campaigning efforts are, where possible, aligned with our other activities and mutually reinforcing. We will also reflect on whom we focus our influencing efforts, given the current and future political situation.

This prioritisation process may alter some details of the plan that follows.

In 2021, we will continue to promote the effective use of statistics and data. We will seek to 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

latest *Data Manifesto*, plus the recommendations contained in our responses to departmental, parliamentary and other relevant consultations.

The response to the Covid-19 pandemic, from a health point of view and an economic point of view, will form an important focus of our work. We will highlight the importance of good statistical and statistical understanding to an effective response to the pandemic. The Society's National Statistics Advisory Group (NSAG) and Covid-19 Taskforce will be vital to these efforts.

We will continue working on previous priority policy areas, including inflation measurement, data ethics (including the use of algorithms in government), gender pay gap reporting and the statistical implications of Brexit and preparations for the 2021-2 census. We will also investigate how we can inform the Government's plans to upgrade its data and statistical skills, which is a central part of its public sector reform plans.

More generally, we will strive to understand new and emerging issues and to develop a prominent and timely voice regarding developments of strategic interest to the Society, its members and statistics, leveraging the expertise of our members. Wherever possible, we will involve members in RSS's consultation responses, campaigns and policy-related events (whether virtual or in-person) - including through sections, Special Interest Groups (SIGs) and the new 'Network' being developed under the auspices of NSAG.

We will communicate clearly to ensure that RSS members are aware of the wide range of policy activity that the Society undertakes on their behalf. Policy achievements will be communicated to fellows to increase their awareness of the changes that the RSS, through their support, brings about, in the interests of both member engagement and member retention.

We will strive 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 continue to add our support, and voice, to international campaigns in defence of statisticians who are being subjected to unfair political pressures (as we have done, in the recent past, in the case of Andreas Georgiou).

NSAG will continue to liaise regularly with the UK Statistics Authority (UKSA), the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR), plus other relevant bodies, to strengthen both official statistics and the roles of statisticians within government departments. NSAG will also work with staff to develop and promote the Society's policy views on a wide range of official statistics matters, while any suitable campaigning opportunities will be identified and, resources permitting, exploited.

The combination of the 'Network' and the Society's new website will enable more information about NSAG, and its achievements, to be made readily available in easily accessible ways. It will also be much easier for fellows, stakeholders and members of

the public to take part, on a virtual basis, in its occasional public consultative meetings. 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.

ESWG's events programme will depend largely on ONS's organisational and financial input, but we expect that it will be more active than in 2019/20 when numerous events were lost to pre-General Election purdah and Covid-19 restrictions.

Active consideration will continue to be given to proposals to put the ESWG on a new footing as an economic measurement foundation, that would enable it to attract external funding.

1.2 Public affairs, press, external-facing events

We will continue to maintain and build relationships with key actors in policy and public affairs. Our public affairs agenda will be driven largely by our policy, research and campaigns work - for example, our *Data Manifesto* and involvement in parliamentary inquiries. Our aim will be to 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 during the year. Many will be online and cost-free but, from time to time, we will participate in events held in-person, when they represent suitable value.

We will highlight the importance of statistics during and following the Covid-19 pandemic, by promoting the work of our Covid-19 Task Force and the work of our membership more widely, through the press, social media and relevant events.

We will identify and exploit a wide range of opportunities to secure positive media coverage for the Society, to highlight both our policy positions and the importance of statistics and statistical literacy. We will work with our three cohorts of Statistical Ambassadors, providing them with opportunities to work with the media, both behind the scenes and with on-the-record interviews. We will look to hold an additional training workshop for the Statistical Ambassadors.

We will continue to build on the success of our main public engagement initiative, Statistics of the Year - with 2021 being its fifth year - and which has secured considerable media coverage for the Society, both in the UK and worldwide.

1.3 Awards for statistical excellence

Our awards for statistical excellence will continue across existing categories for official statistics with the UK Statistics Authority, journalism with ESRC and early-career writing

with *Significance* magazine. Our Voluntary Application Award (in partnership with the OSR) and the Florence Nightingale Award for Excellence in Healthcare Data Analytics (supported by the Health Foundation), which were established in 2020, will also be presented. We will review our pharmaceutical industry award, which is presented jointly with PSI.

The awards give us an opportunity for both member and stakeholder engagement. We will continue to work closely with all our award partners and aim to secure long-term sponsorship agreements where appropriate. We will look to increase the impact of the awards through additional online content and social media engagement in order to increase the reach of each award.

1.4 Statisticians for Society

We will continue to connect small charitable organisations with volunteer statisticians who can help collect, analyse and present data. The Scoping Committee will continue to oversee the initiative and selection of projects for member volunteers. The Review Panel will continue to review the work of our volunteers to ensure it meets the needs of participating organisations.

In 2020, a working group was established to lead the development of a knowledge repository for the charitable sector with aim to launch the first set of statistical resources in 2021. We will also continue to encourage RSS fellows to join charity boards through our partnership with Reach Volunteering and running introductory trustee workshops with industry experts.

We will increase our outreach work in order to boost our exposure and participation by charitable organisations across all UK regions. We will also look at ways to involve RSS local groups in promoting our volunteers' work and encouraging members to take part.

We will continue to work closely with Pro Bono Economics, Operational Research Society and DataKind UK to match our volunteers to opportunities that arise through them and share good practice with the sector. We will signpost to other volunteering opportunities, including with delivery 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.

From December to February, we will carry out a prioritisation exercise to identify where our educational and statistical literacy work should be focused, building on our historical work. We will also seek to ensure that this work is aligned with our training and accreditation offering and mutually reinforcing. In particular, we will examine where the RSS should focus in the broader field of organisations working on maths education, and what partnerships we should pursue to support this.

This prioritisation process may alter some details of the plan that follows.

Our approach

Our education and statistical literacy activities emphasises real life application of statistics and data in daily decision-making, for better outcomes. We focus on the value of gaining statistical and data skills in education, key professions and as informed citizens. We deliver this by influencing policy, campaigning, partnering with key organisations, enabling our members to undertake public engagement and outreach activities and supporting our training and accreditation opportunities. Within the education programme, our main focus is on schools and students.

2.1 Influencing education policy and practice

We will continue to influence the importance given to statistics and data handling in curricula and teaching of statistics and data. Where assessment becomes an issue, we will engage with that too.

We have been reviewing our strategic focus, so that, with our limited resource, we can add most value. Most of our focus is on secondary (post-16) education, as this is a key decision point for UK students. We have identified four principles to guide our work and start from the premise that these are NOT either/or choices:

- A level (and campaigning for AS level) maths is one important avenue. The addition of the large-scale data module has improved matters somewhat, but there are challenges in the ways that 'maths' teachers teach and assess this.
- Working to improve the statistical and data-handling content of other A-level courses (in the natural and social sciences) is another avenue, requiring work with other learned societies.

- Working (with others) to consider creation of a new ‘data science’ qualification, such as the International Data Science in Schools Project, is another priority for the year. A key ambition is to host a high-profile ‘roundtable’ event on data science with key stakeholders, online or in person.
- Working (with others) to ensure ‘core maths’ (with a statistical component) is also available and resourced more widely (both in secondary schools and FE) is another avenue we intend to explore.

To clear time for this more strategic focus, we will respond only to relevant policy consultations issued by government and qualifications’ regulators, including, where resources permit, relevant policy consultations of the devolved nations. We will publicise other consultations where individual RSS Fellows may wish to submit responses.

Our education work includes two key RSS bodies: the Education Policy Advisory Group (EPAG) and the Teaching Statistics Special Interest Group. We are working to promote greater liaison between these two (as well as with the Data Science Section). Over the next year, we will broaden and refresh the membership of EPAG, to support our strategic approach.

Achieving many of our aims will require more strategic engagement with key partners (such as the Royal Society and its ACME programme), various other learned societies and indeed with the Department for Education at a higher decision-making level. We will continue to support and publicise the Mathematics Teacher Training Scholarships scheme-in England. We will also continue to work with the Joint Mathematical Council (JMC) to advocate for appropriate pathways for participation in the teaching, learning and assessment of statistics and data-handling.

Later in 2021, we will consider how best to support and expand our e-teachers members, who have expressed an interest in teaching statistics at secondary level.

We will also continue the engagement with the Office for Statistics Regulation related to Ofqual’s statistical adjustment of 2020 grades, and work with others in the RSS to promote clearer guidance to promote better practice for public policy of statistics in future.

If opportunities arise to support deeper engagement with statistics at other levels of schooling, we will of course consider them, but any deeper engagement below secondary level would require additional resource.

2.2 In key professions

Our education work supports other parts of the RSS in their work on increasing statistical literacy in key professions for wider public benefit: from parliamentarians and policy makers, to journalists and teachers, together with partnering with relevant professional bodies. A key priority for our education work is to advocate for (and

possibly seek external funding for small-scale pilots) that will improve teaching competence in statistics and data-handling.

We will advocate for statistical literacy in policy making within the Westminster Parliament, as well as, if possible, in the devolved parliaments and assemblies. In addition, where possible, exploring opportunities to continue to work with the ONS and the Cabinet Office on events and resources to improve statistical literacy amongst Civil Service communications professionals. We will aim to raise the profile of statistics, encouraging evidence-informed policy making and effective training.

We intend that statistical literacy in the media including advertising and public relations should be a focus for us in 2021, building on work led by the current Vice-President for External Affairs. Plans include the production of an updated and improved version of an earlier *Best Practice Guide for Using Statistics in Communications* - produced in an RSS partnership with the Market Research Society and the Chartered Institute of Public Relations. 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.

At a time when statistics and data visibly have a vital role, building confidence and trust will depend upon the understanding, communication and quality of statistics and data in the public domain. We will take a step-change, by pro-actively challenging the misuse of statistics and data. We will convey the need for high quality education and training, together with accountability to drive change.

We have developed free online courses for journalists on science and statistics (which will require resource to update) . Our Statistical Excellence in Journalism awards will again recognise best practice . We will continue to support and promote the Science Media Centre by providing expertise from our fellowship, to help journalists understanding 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.

2.3 Public engagement and outreach

We will continue to offer opportunities for our fellows to undertake public engagement and outreach activities, to benefit statistical education and careers promotion. Our local groups are encouraged to organise activities for young people, to reach a more diverse audience, and with celebratory occasions and initiatives (such as Maths Week).

In 2021, we plan to continue to support our William Guy Lecturer to deliver lectures to schools, probably online. Where resources permit, we will consider filming future lectures to enable us to build up our online educational resources. We will explore whether working with universities, via their Widening Participation activities, will ensure we reach a more diverse audience than the current schools requesting William Guy lecture events.

Where the opportunity arises, we will work with partners such as Health Data Research UK to create a set of Florence Nightingale lectures.

We plan to review and publicise opportunities for fellows to get involved with existing programmes such as with STEM Learning, Inspiring the Future, and those run by the Nuffield Foundation and the Royal Institution. We will continue to promote our “Hands-on Statistics” resources and support fellows with new additions to the set, where resources permit.

2.4 Significance magazine

We will produce six print issues of *Significance*, in partnership with the American Statistical Association and our publisher, Wiley. Building on the 2020 review of our online offering, we will conduct a design refresh of the significancemagazine.com website, refining and updating layouts, fonts, sections and general look and feel, to ensure that the website remains fresh, modern-looking and approachable, and that its design is in keeping with the redesigned print magazine.

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 2021, 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.

Should post-pandemic circumstances allow, we will host/co-host social events and programmed sessions at the Joint Statistical Meetings and the RSS Annual Conference.

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.

In the coming months, we will be undertaking two pieces of planning that will be relevant to this strategic goal: a plan for how the Society can improve its member offering in the next five years, and a plan for how the Society develops its accreditation, training and education activities.

These plans process may alter some details of the activities that follow.

3.1 Strategy

The strategy for 2021 is to use both the changes to standards and introduction of new accreditation methods to greater advertise opportunities to become a professional member of the RSS and an accredited institute. These changes, plus the structural changes to the membership team, will also allow us to align the professional development framework with our training and corporate membership scheme, providing the opportunity to develop bespoke relationships with our corporate partners.

We will also work to ensure we understand the needs of businesses with regard to accreditation and to the Society's offering more generally, strengthening our connections and building our institutional links.

3.2 Professional Membership

In 2020 the standards for meeting the requirements to become a Graduate Statistician (GradStat) and Chartered Statistician had been significantly reviewed and updated. In addition, we plan to launch a new category of professional membership titled 'data analyst' in the autumn, pending a vote to amend the Society's Bylaws at the annual general meeting held in September. It will be the first full year we can market our new professional pathway, in partnership with a competency framework, further supported by our recognition of prior learning and allowing us to highlight the benefits of becoming a professional member.

Other plans for professional membership include working more closely with our corporate partners and providing their teams with the ability to promote professionalism and development within. The Professional Affairs Committee (PAC) will also continue to review, and if necessary, implement, standards relating to data science.

3.3 Accreditation

As with the standards for professional membership, the standards were reviewed and updated in 2020. Due to the implementation of the CRM, the ability to roll out the changes and accept new applications was delayed so we hope to market these changes and attract more eligible course than previously available to the RSS. In addition to the changes, we will also be advertising a new lower-level form of accreditation that will help individuals gain recognition for good statistical training and knowledge they have gained, whilst not necessarily completing a traditional statistics-based degree. We will seek to reinforce this new form of accreditation through our policy and advocacy work, as well as through more traditional marketing.

These changes have the scope to be hugely popular and the plan is to grow this in 2021.

3.4 Data Science

With the changes made to the standards, data science qualifications are now more likely to be eligible to gain some recognition and the aim is to target those qualifications for accreditation and students for membership.

PAC will also look to continue their work with universities and the data science section to develop consistent standards for data science courses and ensure consistency in the student output and their knowledge.

PAC will also continue to work with other membership bodies, including our work with a coalition of bodies to develop standards and methods to recognise data science knowledge and teaching. PAC will also continue to monitor as to if there will be a need for a data science category of professional membership.

3.5 Training and professional development

In 2021 we will start to run face to face training courses when circumstances allow. Should we be unable to deliver face to face training we will continue to deliver the courses we can virtually. Following our experience in 2020 we would expect to be able to run about 90% of our courses, however with reduced average delegate numbers. Given that virtual courses have a much lower cost to deliver we would still target to deliver the same overall gross profit as if we could run face to face training. We have seen that virtual courses have the potential to open up new markets to us. We will therefore continue to look to run virtual courses as part of our training programme once we are able to offer face to face training again.

We plan to restart our partnership with Manchester University 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 to continue the work we started in 2020 to expand our marketing of the courses through RSS' digital channels, social media and investigate new marketing opportunities.

We will improve the coordination between the membership and accreditation activities and our training activities, given the changes to the standards and accreditation for professional membership. This will help advertise both the training opportunities and the professional recognition individuals can gain, allowing us to provide a better package of development and support to individual members and corporate members focusing on wider statistical training, including statistics.

3.6 African Institute for Mathematical Sciences

We will continue to encourage RSS members to volunteer as lecturers and tutors at the various AIMS centres in Africa. We will provide financial support through our funding partners such as Springer, 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 statistics syllabus at other AIMS centres. Additional support will be provided through the recruitment of suitable supervisors for 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 ended in 2020 and so we will continue to seek new supporters for this work.

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 (AAAG), we will continue to advocate for increased funding for research into statistics and the wider cross-discipline subjects. This includes looking at future frameworks. We will take on core activities of the disbanded Committee of Professors of Statistics (COPS) by developing a network of leaders of statistical groups at universities and working with this group to identify areas where coordination or support for the community is necessary.

In 2021, universities will be affected by both the Covid-19 pandemic and Brexit. These may impact on teaching methods, student numbers, funding arrangements and international collaboration. We will closely monitor how these situations develop and support the discipline in its response.

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.

We will continue to scrutinise developments in University research and teaching assessment frameworks, in particular any proposals arising out of the Pearce review of the TEF. Where appropriate, we will work with OfS to improve the statistical inputs to any revised TEF.

The RSS will also work with UKRI to help them consider how to improve the assessment of data driven research, to ensure the right statistical skills in the research system, and to promote research integrity from a statistical point of view.

4.2 Journals

We will edit and produce four issues of Series A, five issues of Series B and five issues of Series C, with the aim of expanding the series from currently around 4000 pages in total, in line with the movement towards full open access in the next few years that is increasingly being demanded by research funding bodies. To achieve this and 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 work to improve further the rapid times to early on-line publication that have been established in recent years, by taking advantage of the publisher's streamlining of production workflow processes made possible by advances in digital technology. In consultation with the publisher, proposals for redesigning the journals will be made in view of this.

The Discussion Meetings Committee will continue its work to develop and expand the programme of flagship single-paper and extended discussion meetings, drawing on the expertise and knowledge 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 Society with income that is used to cross-subsidise its activities. The finances of the current contract with Wiley give the Society some certainty of income for the period 2017–2022 through the annual guaranteed payments. However, although the implications of 'open access' mandates from research funders have for the time being become less immediate, the economic consequences of the coronavirus

pandemic will undoubtedly be felt in institutional library budgets throughout the world and therefore on subscription renewals and the total income from the Society's publications.

In addition, as much of subscription income is collected in dollars, fluctuations in exchange rates increase the uncertainties. The Society will therefore continue to review with the publisher the evolving subscription licences and deals and how to add further value to existing content to sustain income. We will keep under review the decline in printed journals for institutions to determine when they cease to yield overall revenue.

To meet such challenges and to maintain the series as top flight journals, the Editorial Panels have expanded their membership and adjusted their terms of reference with the aim of increasing submission rates to raise the journals' profile in areas such as data science and statistics in machine learning, and to maintain standards in their more established fields of coverage.

The publisher's promotional and marketing strategies are aimed particularly at the emerging economies, and we will collaborate with them in their campaigns and strategies. We will carefully monitor the trend in international open access policies and how to use the data that are available through further development of Wiley's Web platform launched in 2018.

On the wider question of issues arising from the collection and use of and access to data, the publications will endeavour to collaborate with the Data Science Section and Special Interest Group on Data Ethics to formulate policy 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 Manchester in September 2021. We will continue the streamed-by-topic format which has proved highly successful in recent years but will use the experience of moving conference to an online format in 2020 to keep the programme content fresh and innovate where appropriate. While ensuring we to maximise in-person participation at the conference we will also explore options for delivering conference as a hybrid event to enable those unable to travel to Manchester to participate. A hybrid version of the conference will only be implemented if it can be done in a way that doesn't undermine the effectiveness and financial stability of the conference.

We will undertake planning for our 2022 and 2023 conferences and continue work on sourcing venues for 2024 and beyond which will provide the opportunity for 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. This programme will be delivered through a combination of in-person, hybrid and online events. We will also continue to explore event partnerships to promote the Society to wider audiences and extending our geographical presence beyond London. This will include consideration of moving keynote events to other locations in the UK.

Again building on our experience of moving events to an online format during 2020, we will look to further develop content-sharing from events, including video and live streaming, 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 are seeking fresh nominations for the 2021 Honours, which will be presented at the Society's conference in September 2021. The honours up for award are the: Guy Medals in Silver and Bronze, Barnett Award, Bradford Hill Medal, Chambers Medal, Greenfield Industrial Medal, Honorary Fellowship, Howard Medal, Research Prize, West Medal and Wood Medal.

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

In 2020, we launched the David G. Kendall Award for young researchers with the Bernoulli Society. We will find ways to encourage nominations for the inaugural award which will be announced in 2021.

4.5 Sections and Special Interest Groups

Sections and special interest groups will continue to hold meetings to support learning and development, and implementation of statistical methodology. Reports from these meetings will continue to be published on the RSS website so the discussions can be shared. 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 encourage sections to consider how they might respond to matters of public interest relating to their area of expertise issues. In 2021, 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 build on our experience of moving events to an online format during 2020 by further developing content-sharing from events, including video and live streaming, which will enable us to provide premium content for fellows and generate income from non-fellows.

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

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

We will encourage the creation of special interest groups in key areas not currently covered by existing sections.

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.

In the coming months, we will be undertaking a plan for how the Society can improve its member offering in the next five years.

These plans process may alter some details of the activities that follow.

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

In 2021 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 engagement, recruitment, retention, communications and promoting professional affairs and accreditation.

The focus across all areas of membership during 2021 will be to maximise the opportunities and benefits delivered by the implementation of the new CRM/CMS project. 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 considering the new processes.

5.2 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), committees, 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. We will consult with members to further explore areas in which they can utilise and share their expertise and take these forward for development and implementation, for example and expansion of the mentoring programme for GradStats. For more details, please see sections 1.4 and 1.5 above

We recognise that members have different requirements from the RSS at various stages of their careers and that a 'one size fits all' approach to benefit provision is no longer appropriate. We will explore these wants/needs with members to identify how the RSS can help and support them. A review of benefits will be undertaken to ensure they are fit for purpose and targeted to the right member segment at the appropriate time. If we are not delivering those services/benefits required, we will investigate, analyse and where possible implement/deliver to meet member needs/expectations. The delivery of benefits will be increasingly targeted at specific member segments and therefore giving a more personalised experience.

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

5.3 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 welcome email and electronic information 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 and CMS 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.

5.4 Member communications

The RSS website saw a significant revamp in 2020 with a cleaner design and better navigation. We will work to keep the new website up-to-date and engaging, by continuing to publish statistics-related content of interest to members. We also ensure we publish regular updates on Society activities, events, volunteering opportunities and other notices that might be of interest to them.

This content will continue to be sent out to members via our fortnightly member newsletter, which also carries exclusive content such as messages from the CEO/president, free book giveaways and highlighting the publisher/event/training discounts and free-to-read articles from our journals that come with membership. Member newsletters link back to news and events content on the main website, which is continually updated to reflect the Society's ongoing activities.

In addition, there are six conference-focused emails sent throughout the year to encourage members to take part. Furthermore, the termly e-Teacher newsletter has been added to the list of formatted, branded emails specifically aimed at a part of the

membership. The supplementary print newsletter, *Member Update*, will continue to be sent to fellows three times a year, with every other issue of *Significance*.

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

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.

5.5 Member recruitment

In 2021 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. The new CRM system and website will enable us to 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.

5.6 Local groups

We will maintain our programme of work with local groups to organise topical meetings in their geographical area that are attractive to a range of individuals and support their engagement with potential new members.

We will work with local groups to encourage their engagement in Maths Week activities around the UK.

In 2021, we will look to increase our support for local groups and assist them in engaging with the RSS and the wider membership. The new contact database and website will enable local groups to engage with local RSS members and the wider community, and we will make sure they have adequate support as they continue to familiarise themselves with the new system.

We will continue to encourage the formation of local groups in geographical areas not covered by existing 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 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' with an emphasis on sustainability. While the Covid-19 pandemic has impacted the value of our portfolio our free reserves are in an excellent position to support the Society's activities in the year ahead.

6.2 Funding, business development, marketing

We will seek to attract external funding for new initiatives in our policy, accreditation and membership work. We will also work on developing our legacy fundraising capabilities.

For marketing training courses our main routes continue to be: Google AdWords; LinkedIn; NCRM; RSS Twitter account and Allstat emails. We will also seek to extend our marketing reach by using our policy and campaigning efforts, where possible, to enforce our accreditation and training offerings, and by investing more time in developing content on LinkedIn, which will strengthen our 'earned' reach. This year we

are also advertising our courses on Reed training for which we pay a fee for each enquiry. We will review the effectiveness of this before deciding on continuing next year.

Our jobs board is advertised through our website and newsletter. Currently we have no plans to expand the advertising of our jobs board. The new website has a banner link on the landing page to our jobs board which should increase traffic to the page.

For venue hire our marketing strategy is based around increasing its visibility on the RSS website by putting a link on the landing page and by promoting the venue through venue listing sites. We plan to place the venue on four websites where we only pay on sales (usually 10%) and one where we pay a monthly fee.

Our pricing is designed to be competitive compared to our competitors with discounts for charities and our corporate members. We have done this to encourage sales while we work to reopen our venue hire business.

6.3 RSS premises at 12 Errol Street

The Errol Street premises have been closed to members and for public use (training, room hire) since March 2020. Whilst it was reopened for staff use on a one-day-a-week basis until the revised Government guidance came into force in November, it is unlikely to be operating on a full-time basis until Q2 2021 at the earliest. The senior management team will continue to review the situation and adhere to guidelines and best practice. A consultation with staff as to the future of working practices has informed our thinking on how we use the building in the future. RSS business has been delivered successfully by staff working remotely. It is unlikely that there will be a return to all staff working from Errol Street on a full-time basis as we envisage a blended approach with a mixture of both office and home working.

This, together with broader changes in working patterns and events (which have been accelerated by Covid-19, but are likely to persist even if and when the pandemic ends), raise important questions about the future use of the building. We plan to undertake a review of the RSS's property and building in the Spring and Summer of 2021 to consider what our long-term position should be.

We continue working on the building infrastructure and making necessary repairs decoration. The 2021 budget includes an increased amount for building maintenance, since the smaller amounts budgeted in previous years were consistently exceeded due to unexpected works – we believe the 2021 budget is more realistic. We will concentrate on essential refurbishments, aiming to gradually address the recommendations of reasonable adjustments to create a more user-friendly accessible building.

Further works will fall into place as the cyclical maintenance and restoration e.g. parts of the building exterior.

The works to Finsbury Tower will carry on throughout 2021. The noise disruption will be reduced; however, the flow of large vehicles is likely to continue which will affect the access to this area.

6.4 Venue hire

Following the closure of our venue in March 2020 we plan to reopen our venue hire business in 2021 when circumstances allow. The recent refurbishment work has greatly improved our offering and we have developed a marketing plan to promote the new features. Our marketing strategy is based around increasing the prominence of venue hire on the RSS website by putting a link on the landing page and by promoting the venue through several specialist venue listing sites.

6.5 Information technology

We will take a more strategic approach to Digital and embed best practice throughout the RSS.

Our IT infrastructure will be optimised for remote and hybrid working. This will include dedicated laptops for all staff and collaborative working using Teams. We will continue to enhance our information security and data auditing to anticipate and respond to emerging threats.

Our integrated CRM and website will enable us to move away from a plethora of legacy IT systems, saving significant time and money. We will reduce our dependency on external suppliers and bring critical skills and processes in-house. Automated comms and reporting will cut down on time intensive administrative tasks.

The move to online events has reduced the time required to edit and post them to social media. We will focus on growing our YouTube and SoundCloud channels and promoting them to an international audience.

We will ensure that our digital offering reflects the interests of our members. We will conduct surveys and review data provided to us in MyRSS to provide more personalised services.

We will encourage our sections and local groups to post content on our main website rather than disparate microsites. This will increase awareness of their activities and encourage others to join RSS groups.

6.6 Staffing, human resources, benefits, pensions

The Society will be recruiting to fill two new roles created in a restructuring that took place in Q4 2020: a Policy Data Analyst, and a Committee and Governance Assistant. These hires will improve our ability to deliver on policy objectives and ensure we continue to support our members effectively.

We will continue to monitor the compensation we offer to staff to ensure that it is competitive in the wider market.

6.7 Governance

The Society's main governance committees will meet as scheduled in 2021. 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.

6.8 Management information

The RSS Council now reviews a management information dashboard at each of its meetings.

6.9 Diversity

We plan to build on the Society's work to promote equality, diversity and inclusion by:

- improving the data we collect on the diversity of the RSS membership, in relation to ethnicity, gender, sexuality, disability, age and other protected characteristics;
- working to increase the diversity and inclusivity of the Society's committees, sections, groups, events and honours;
- consulting staff on how we can further build on our HR policies and practices to ensure that we systematically and proactively promote diversity and inclusion in the staff team;
- advocating for the production and use of statistics to tackle societal racism and other forms of inequality; and
- having an honest conversation about the historical legacy of particular academic traditions including eugenics.

6.10 RSS Green Group

The RSS Green Group is staff-led and meets periodically to identify and discuss ways in which the Society's procedures and purchasing practices could become more environmentally conscious. Many decisions in this area need to be balanced against practical and financial implications, so the Group will draw up a set of principles to help guide and prioritise its work in the future - as it considers issues including procurement, waste disposal and energy consumption.