

Strictly embargoed until 00:01 Tuesday 28 April 2020

The Royal Statistical Society appoints new Chief Executive

The Royal Statistical Society (RSS), the leading membership body advocating for the importance of statistics and data, is pleased to announce the appointment of Stian Westlake as its new Chief Executive.

Stian, a former government advisor and Executive Director at Nesta, will take up the role in July 2020. He will lead on a programme of activities that take forward the strategic goals of the Society, with projects including its Covid-19 Task Force, the Data Manifesto and the National Lottery funded initiative, Statisticians for Society.

As an Executive Director at Nesta from 2009 to 2017, Stian ran the organisation's think-tank. Under his leadership, the team launched a range of initiatives on data and evidence, including the Alliance for Useful Evidence, the Innovation Growth Lab and the Innovation Index (in partnership with ONS), as well as significantly increasing its external income. After this, Stian served as Policy Advisor to three successive ministers for universities and science. He is co-author of *Capitalism Without Capital*, a book about intangible investment and the economy. Stian is a Governor of the National Institute for Economic and Social Research and sits on the advisory board of the Institute for Community Studies.

Stian takes the role over from Nicola Emmerson, the Society's Director of Membership and Professional Affairs, who has led the organisation on an interim basis since February. For the previous eight years the Society was steered by Hetan Shah, who is now Chief Executive at the British Academy.

Commenting on the appointment, Professor Deborah Ashby, President of the RSS said: "We are thrilled to appoint Stian as our new Chief Executive. His experience in advising government on STEM and higher education issues, along with his work at Nesta on large policy and data projects, is extremely valuable.

"Statistics have never been so important as they are now, and I know Stian is the ideal person to lead on the fellowship's work putting data at the heart of understanding and decision making."

Stian Westlake commented: "In an increasingly complex world, the role of the RSS is more crucial than ever. By promoting evidence, data and rigour in public life, and by supporting and advocating for statisticians and the discipline of statistics, the RSS is helping to push the frontiers of knowledge and change the world for the better.

"I'm delighted to have the opportunity to lead the Society, and to build on the superb work done by my predecessor Hetan Shah and acting CEO Nicola Emmerson, the staff and fellowship. I hope to be able to continue and deepen our impact."

Notes to editors:

- The Royal Statistical Society (RSS), founded in 1834, is one of the world's most distinguished and renowned statistical societies. It is a learned society for statistics, a professional body for statisticians and a charity which promotes statistics, data and evidence for the public good. Today the RSS has around 10,000 members around the world.
- More information on the Society's Covid-19 Task Force, its Data Manifesto and the Statisticians for Society initiative can be found via the links below:
- <https://rss.org.uk/news-publication/news-publications/2020/general-news/rss-launches-new-covid-19-task-force/>
- <https://rss.org.uk/policy-campaigns/policy/our-data-manifesto/>
- <https://rss.org.uk/membership/volunteering-and-promoting/statisticians-for-society-initiative/>