



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Constituency Office  
11 Castle Street  
Dumbarton  
G82 1QS

Tel: 01389 734214  
Fax: 01389 761498

Email: [jackie.baillie.msp@scottish.parliament.uk](mailto:jackie.baillie.msp@scottish.parliament.uk)  
[www.jackiebaillie.co.uk](http://www.jackiebaillie.co.uk)

Sir Michael Scholar  
Chair  
UK Statistics Authority  
1 Drummond Gate  
London  
SW1V 2QQ

8<sup>th</sup> July 2011

Dear Sir Michael,

I am writing to you to raise concerns regarding the potentially serious abuse of Official Statistics publications by the Scottish Government.

I do so in the context of Protocol 2 of the UK Statistics Authority Code of Practice for Official Statistics (January 2009) which states that **“Statistical reports should be released into the public domain in an orderly manner that promotes public confidence and gives equal access to all, subject to relevant legislation.”**

These concerns relate to comments from the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing, Ms Nicola Sturgeon, in relation to workforce statistics published by the ISD section of NHS Scotland on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> June 2011. As you can see from the enclosed press release, it makes clear that Ms Sturgeon is commenting on the statistics collated and published that day by ISD. However after querying the Minister’s interpretation of those statistics with the Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe), it emerged that the claims contained in the press release were in fact based on completely different and unreferenced sets of statistics, namely the Public Sector Employment statistics and NHS Boards’ workforce projections. Furthermore, a “revised” set of figures were used obtained via a “management exercise” which were never published. The response from SPICe, along with the press release as it was issued to journalists, are attached for information. Interestingly no version of this press release appeared on the Scottish Government’s website as is normal practice.

As you will be aware, subsection 9 of the Protocol rules that release practices should:

**“Ensure that government statements issued alongside official statistics, and referring to, or based upon, them:**

- a. contain a prominent link to the statistical release and clearly refer to the source of the statistics;
- b. are labelled clearly as policy statements (or ministerial statements) and are readily distinguished from a statistical release; and
- c. c. meet basic professional standards (for example, statistics should be cited accurately, and charts should be drawn in an accurate and impartial way).”

I believe that by presenting the statistics in this manner and omitting important information the Scottish Government’s comments were misleading and potentially in breach of the Code as set out above.

I would be grateful if you would confirm if you believe there has indeed been a breach of any part of the Code or the provisions of the Statistics and Registration Services Act (2007) and what recourse there is available in order that such an abuse might be prevented in the future.

I am grateful to you for your consideration of what I regard as a very serious matter and look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Yours Sincerely

Jackie Baillie MSP

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Baillie', with a large, stylized flourish underneath.

**Jackie Baillie MSP**  
**Dumbarton Constituency**