

From: Paul Allin
To: Authority Enquiries
Cc: Deana Leadbetter
Date: 4 October 2015
Subject: Alleged delays to publication of NHS performance monitoring reports

Dear Sir Andrew

I was concerned to read in today's Observer that "Neither Monitor's quarterly report on how the NHS is faring, nor equivalent data from the NHS Trust Development Authority (TDA), have been published, as they usually are around the time of the organisations' board meetings last month". The article by Denis Campbell reports that "Government ministers have buried NHS statistics that show the service hurtling towards an unprecedented £2bn deficit to avoid overshadowing the Tory party conference, say top NHS officials".

If this is true and if these NHS performance reports constitute official statistics - the article refers to 'figures' and to 'data', as well as 'statistics', so the only contention would appear to be whether or not the organisations themselves are in scope - then there would seem to be a serious breach of the spirit of the Code of Practice (especially Principle 2, with its concern for the orderly publication of statistical reports and that official statistics should be made equally available to all subject to statutory provisions for pre-release access).

I have tried without success to find quarterly statistical reports on Monitor's website (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/monitor-board-papers-for-30-september-2015-meeting>). Statistics are almost as difficult to find on the NHS TDA website (<http://www.ntda.nhs.uk/>), with the exception of a 'Winter report', published in March 2014, on how NHS Trusts performed over the months Aug 2013 to Jan 2014.

I look forward to hearing what the UK Statistics Authority makes of today's article and whether there are lessons not only for the handling of NHS performance reports but also for official statistics more generally. It is this latter aspect that particularly worries me, lest the treatment of official statistics in the high profile area of health becomes the exemplar for similar practices elsewhere, to the detriment of users beyond those in government.

I am copying this to Deana Leadbetter, Health Statistics Users Group.

Yours sincerely,

Paul

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