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**John Pullinger CB CStat** | National StatisticianMr Ed Humpherson  
UK Statistics Authority  
Sent by email only

19 April 2016

Dear Ed,

**Migration Statistics**

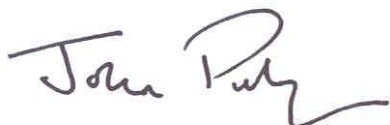
Thank you for your [letter of 23 March](#) outlining some concerns in relation to the current debate on migration statistics produced from the International Passenger Survey (IPS) and from National Insurance Numbers (NINOs).

You are right that this is a complex area and there is a risk that a lack of clarity on why the sources differ has the potential to undermine public confidence in these statistics. Assessing differences between survey and administrative data is rarely straightforward as they are set up for different purposes and to measure different concepts. This is certainly the case when comparing the IPS and NINO data and our [information note](#) in March sets out for our users why the two sources might be expected to differ including during periods of change in migration patterns.

Although the data from the different sources will never fully match, the recent divergence between these two series does need to be understood, explained and be credible with users. Currently, the IPS provides the most appropriate existing measure of international migration consistent with the UN definition of migration (ie. changing country of usual residence for 12 months or more). In May, we will set out the data from the International Passenger Survey showing the numbers of long term migrants, short term migrants and those that have come to the UK for very short periods to work or look for work. As part of assessing more fully the recent differences between the migration data sources, we will also analyse some complex administrative datasets. Access to the relevant data has been provided and analysis is underway. A taskforce comprising analytical experts from ONS, DWP, HMRC, Home Office and Cabinet Office is in place and will look at the available evidence, including emerging findings from this further analysis. We are expecting to report on this work in May and recognise that these additional data, and the value they can bring, will need to be well explained to users.

I hope this is reassuring. There will be a need to continue to monitor the various data sources over time and there may well be a need to analyse further these new datasets, depending on what the data show. We will be transparent and upfront with users on our findings and with respect to any further reconciliation work that may be required.

Yours sincerely,

**John Pullinger**