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**Ed Humpherson, Director General for Regulation**

Scott Heald  
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Information Services Division,  
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02 March 2017

Dear Scott

**ASSESSMENT OF STATISTICS ON NHS WAITING TIMES IN SCOTLAND (PHASE 2)**

Thank you for the correspondence outlining the actions that have been taken to address the requirements in Assessment Report number 254 on Statistics on NHS Waiting Times in Scotland (Phase 2) On behalf of the Board of the Statistics Authority, I have reviewed these on the advice of the Assessment team and I am pleased to confirm the designation of: Emergency Department Activity Waiting Times: Cancer Waiting Times in Scotland: National Drug and Alcohol Treatment Waiting Times Report: and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services Waiting Times in Scotland.

We look forward to reviewing further evidence later this year to determine whether we can recommend to the Board of the Statistics Authority that it confirms the designation as National Statistics of statistics on 18 Weeks Referral to Treatment Waiting Times.

I have been very impressed that ISD has set up a smart publishing improvement programme to improve the way that value is added to its statistical outputs. The use of open data and interactive visualisation releases alongside themed reports will mark a significant change to disseminating statistics. The intention to disseminate more information via social media, and conduct regular user engagement sessions will allow the statistics to be useful to a much wider audience. I like particularly how much better the statisticians have set the context for the publication of the Emergency Department waiting times through the publication, roughly quarterly, of reports on attendances at Emergency Departments in Scotland. They are great examples to other producers of how to substantially add value to data.

I would commend the statisticians for their work on enhancing the quality assurance of these statistics. They have gone a long way to providing assurances to users around the quality of these statistics and the efforts expended in checking them.

Finally I am aware that ISD has been commissioned to support the provision of data management, analytics and intelligence leadership for a four year programme of work by Healthcare Improvement Scotland to deliver improved access to child and adolescent mental health services and psychological therapies and reduce waiting times. This vital analytical work will help NHS staff make use of improved methods to ensure that services are designed and delivered in the most effective way, to make best use of the expert clinicians' time, and to ensure people needing these services are seen by the right person, in the right place, as soon as possible. It's a fine example of better statistics leading to better decisions.

National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and value and is something to be celebrated. We invite you to include a statement alongside the statistics which reflects the National Statistics status. You may wish to base your statement on the boilerplate text included within the Assessment Report.

Please feel free to discuss any aspect of this with us at any time. I am copying this letter to John Pullinger, the National Statistician,

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ed Humpherson', with a stylized, cursive script.

Ed Humpherson