
Ed Humpherson, Director General for Regulation

Scott Heald
Head of Statistics
Information Services Division,
NHS National Services Scotland
Area 122A, Gyle Square
1 South Gyle Street
Edinburgh.
EH12 9EB

02 March 2017

Dear Scott

ASSESSMENT OF SCOTTISH PUBLIC AND MENTAL HEALTH STATISTICS

Thank you for the correspondence outlining the actions that have been taken to address the requirements in Assessment Report number 260 on *Statistics on Public and Mental Health in Scotland*. 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: Hospital inpatient care of people with mental health problems in Scotland; Suicide Statistics for Scotland; Healthy Life Expectancy in Scotland; and NHS Smoking Cessation Service Statistics (Scotland).

I welcome the improved commentary and charts in the statistical reports particularly the supporting text to all outputs which aids users and highlights any issues users should be aware of in interpreting the results. The web platforms for these statistics provide brief, clear narratives of the main findings and signposts to other relevant and more detailed statistics. I was struck that statisticians are publishing more-detailed information about the quality and reliability of the statistics and making much more clear their strengths and limitations in relation to use and ensuring that users are informed of all main sources of error and bias. Of particular note is the improved information about the coherence of Mental Health and Suicide statistics with other official and National Statistics to aid the use of the statistics and the useful addition of easy-to-find links to comparable statistics produced by other UK countries.

I am aware of the work of the statistics teams in reviewing the types of checks carried out by data collectors and suppliers, as well as the operational circumstances in which the data are produced. The statistics teams have managed their relationships with suppliers well in establishing clear processes for data provision and for managing change. I congratulate them on effectively communicating with their data suppliers and others to ensure users are provided with clear explanations of the strengths and limitations of the data

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'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial 'E' and a long, sweeping tail.

Ed Humpherson