
Ed Humpherson, Director General for Regulation

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Dear Jonathan

Thank you for your letter of 28 March providing an update on the action plan in response to the recommendations in the Income and Earnings Monitoring Review of February 2015¹.

I am glad to see the progress made since your last formal update in July. In particular, the publication on 16 December 2016 of Research Outputs on income from combined PAYE and Benefits data, as part of the Programme's Administrative Data Census Project, which I have already commended the Office for National Statistics on in January 2017². I also appreciate the detail you have given around areas where you think it will be difficult to make progress which we asked you to elaborate on when we had an email exchange in December.

However, it is a shame you have reached the conclusion little progress can be made to improve the quality and timeliness of data on income from self employment. As the nature of employment is changing, and the proportion of self employed people in the workforce increases, there is an increasing demand for robust data in this area. It is therefore crucial that we stay focused on this important issue to ensure labour market statistics stay relevant and add value to the public. We will discuss with your teams how we can work together on this after the General Election.

It is also disappointing that there has been limited progress to improve accessibility of income and earnings statistics across Government Departments. I recognise that changes to the ONS website are part of a wider project, and I hope the changes to the website over the coming months that you mention in your letter will provide the web-based 'hub' for income and earnings which has been anticipated and would meet user needs.

I look forward to the publication of the reconciliation between ONS's two main sources of earnings statistics – ASHE and AWE – which has been planned since late 2014, and the publication of the analysis on the gender pay gap – which had been due to be published last year.

Yours sincerely,



Ed Humpherson

¹ <https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/publication/the-coherence-and-accessibility-of-official-statistics-on-income-and-earnings/>

² <https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/correspondence/research-outputs-on-income-from-combined-payee-and-benefits-data-2/>