
Director General for Regulation

Ed Smith
Chair
NHS Improvement

29 June 2017

Dear Ed

Thank you for NHS Digital's and NHS England's response^[1] to my letter^[2] outlining proposals for improving the timeliness of Accident and Emergency (A&E) statistics. As you know, we emphasise the importance of releasing statistics in an orderly way, to ensure public trust in the organisations producing these statistics and maximise the confidence users have in the data.

The proposals for A&E statistics set out in the letter are sensible and welcome. Reducing the time lag for A&E data from around 6 weeks to around 2 will provide more timely and useful information to all users. I also welcome the more timely provision of clinical quality indicators, and the proposal for a combined annual review, which would in effect combine data sources that are currently presented separately to users. I trust that all these plans will be developed and implemented in consultation with users both internal and external to the health service and government.

I would also like to commend NHS Digital and NHS England for the joint approach to this. As you know the Office for Statistics Regulation has been calling^[3] for more collaboration between the various organisations producing health and care statistics, with the aim of improving their accessibility and coherence. This is another good example of how producers of official statistics are collectively responding to the call for change and I hope there will be many more in the near future.

I would appreciate you keeping my health and social care team up to date with progress. I am copying this letter to Sir Chris Wormald, Permanent Secretary at the Department of Health; John Pullinger, National Statistician; Sir Malcolm Grant, Chair of NHS England; Noel Gordon, Chair of NHS Digital, Chris Roebuck, head of profession at NHS Digital; Mark Svenson, head of profession at NHS England; and Paul Stroner, head of profession at NHS Improvement.

Yours sincerely



Ed Humpherson
Director General for Regulation

^[1] 29 June 2017: <https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/correspondence/nhs-accident-and-emergency-data/>

^[2] 20 February 2017: www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Letter-from-Ed-Humpherson-to-Malcom-Grant-200217.pdf

^[3] www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/monitoring-and-assessment/monitoring/monitoring-work-programme/health-and-care-interventions/round-table/