
Director General for RegulationDeana Leadbeter, Chair
Health Statistics User Group

29 June 2017

Dear Deana,

I am writing to update you on the work the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) has been doing in the past year to drive improvements in the coherence and accessibility of and insight from health and social care statistics in England. Better statistics and data in health and social care are needed to allow users (both internal and external to government and the health service) to make the best decisions, inform public debate, develop strong policy, and hold the government to account.

As you know, in early 2016 OSR brought together leaders of organisations responsible for publishing statistics on health and social care. In this Round Table meeting we identified and discussed various issues with the 'statistical system' that have been making it difficult for users to access both statistics and data, as well as find complete and coherent answers to questions regarding health and social care¹. Since then we have had two further productive discussions² on how to solve these issues whilst recognising there are short and long term considerations, and a group³ of lead statisticians have formed the 'English Health Statistics Steering Group' and produced a joint work plan⁴ to help prioritisation.

Over the past year I have been encouraged at the way this discussion has matured. As a result, I announced at the last roundtable that I did not intend to convene the group again. The National Statistician, John Pullinger, gave his wholehearted support to pursuing the work and improving these statistics. OSR will continue to undertake regulatory activities on health and care statistics, and we will be monitoring progress in the system and offering challenge when required, as well as speaking to a wide range of users.

As well as the Round Table, in July 2016 OSR held a Health and Care Summit to ensure our work reached a wider audience and brought in more perspectives and I am pleased to let you know that we intend to again bring a wider set of users into this conversation by organising a second health and social care summit in Autumn 2017. This event will be an important milestone as it will give users a chance to hear, and comment, on the progress made over the last year and to contribute their ideas for improvements.

I hope you will be able to join us at this event. In the mean time please encourage the health and care statistics user group to contact my team if they have any concerns about official statistics and data.

Yours sincerely



Ed Humpherson

¹ www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/publication/health-and-care-statistics-in-england-the-statistics-authoritys-direction-of-travel/

² www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/monitoring-and-assessment/monitoring/monitoring-work-programme/health-and-care-interventions/round-table/

³ <https://gss.civilservice.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/English-Health-Statistics-Steering-Group-ToR.docx>

⁴ <https://gss.civilservice.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Increasing-the-Coherence-of-English-Health-and-Care-Statistics-Action-Plan.docx>