

27 July 2017

Dear Ed,

Thank you for your letter and the publication of the Office for Statistics Regulation report on student migration estimates. This sets out some actions we need to take to improve the estimates of student migration. The report focuses on the student migration estimates, but I thought it would be helpful if I set out the broader approach we are taking to developing migration statistics as a whole.

As your report acknowledges, ONS have a programme of work underway to better understand the student migration numbers and the differences between the immigration and emigration for study numbers. There will be a further significant update to this work published on 24 August alongside the next Migration Statistics Quarterly Report which will explain to users what we have learned from the work so far and any further work arising.

Migration statistics are going to continue to play a key role in public debate over the next few years. On 23 February 2017ⁱ, ONS published a paper setting out a conceptual framework for how we would improve migration statistics. With the Digital Economy Act, the Government Statistical Service have the opportunity to make significant progress in the reporting of statistics against this framework. I will, therefore, be setting out in September a full plan of how we will work in partnership across Government to continue to develop migration statistics.

Copies of this letter are being sent to John Pullinger, National Statistician, David Blunt, Chief Statistician at the Home Office; and Jon Simmons, Head of Migration and Border Analysis at the Home Office.

Yours sincerely



Iain Bell
Deputy National Statistician and Director General, Population and Public Policy
Office for National Statistics

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/internationalmigration/articles/international-migrationdataandanalysisimprovingtheevidence/february2017>