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**Director General for Regulation**

Noel Gordon  
Chair  
NHS Digital  
(By email)

14 December 2017

Dear Noel

I am writing to ask NHS Digital to consider publishing an output providing further insight into the mental health workforce. In particular, this publication could set out in a more accessible way:

- How many people are working in mental health across the whole NHS in England?
- And, how many people are working in NHS mental health trusts?

You will be aware of recent debates around changes in mental health staffing numbers over time. It is clear that the answers differ depending on the definitions used. For example, some choose to look at staff working in mental health services across all NHS trusts and others look at staff working in specialised mental health trusts. Both breakdowns of the data are appropriate, depending on the question asked.

NHS Digital's workforce statistics are the primary source for insight in this debate. While the data are comprehensive and allow users to flexibly interrogate the data to meet their information needs, it is not clear how to look at staffing in mental health trusts, and what staffing groups to include when searching for an answer.

Given this, NHS Digital has been aiding the debate in the last month with extra published ad hoc tables, which I commend. I would like you to consider going further by publishing an additional output about the mental health workforce. This would require publishing your own data in a more accessible format, and also may involve pulling together various sources of workforce data that other organisations publish. Such an output would provide valuable insight into mental health care in England.

Accessible statistics are important for public debate and in my view there is an opportunity here for NHS Digital to add value to an important area of contemporary interest.

I have copied this letter to Mark Svenson, Head of Profession for Statistics at the Department of Health, and Chris Roebuck, Head of Profession at NHS Digital.

Yours sincerely



Ed Humpherson  
Director General for Regulation