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**Mark Pont, Assessment Programme Lead**

Tony O'Connor  
Head of Profession for Statistics  
Ministry of Defence  
(by email)

19 December 2017

Dear Tony

**STATISTICS ON UK ARMED FORCES RESOURCES**

Thank you very much for the open and positive engagement of yourself and your team during our short review of these statistics. We reviewed the statistics against the three pillars – trustworthiness, quality and value – that are fundamental to supporting public confidence in statistics and form the basis of National Statistics status. This letter confirms our findings.

We recognise that the statistics are primarily used within the MOD and to assure parliament in particular relevant areas. We welcome the efforts from the statisticians to engage more widely, but acknowledge that demand outside of the defence system is limited.

The *Defence Departmental Resources: 2016* bulletin brings real clarity for the reader, both for the lay person or an expert in the field of defence. It is well laid out and the additional information included in the accompanying Background Quality Report, particularly on methodology and the potential uses of the statistics, is also welcomed. The commentary in each of the subsections, such as the chapter on Equipment Expenditure, is helpful and insightful. To enhance the value of the statistics, it may be worth considering whether including a high-level summary at the start that brings everything together before exploring each specific area in more detail would be beneficial.

Most of the data underpinning the Departmental Resources statistics are generated from the department's accounting data. We noted that the published Annual Report and Accounts for 2015/16 were qualified by the National Audit Office. We consider that in the interests of being transparent on data quality, you should explain within the statistical bulletin what impact (if any) any such qualified audit opinion has on the quality of the statistics.

Once again, thanks for your time and engaging so positively with us. Please let me know if there is any aspect of this letter that you wish to discuss.

Yours sincerely



Mark Pont  
Assessment Programme Lead