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**Director General for Regulation**

Mark Svenson  
Head of Operational Information for Commissioning  
NHS England

22 January 2018

Dear Mark

**Accident and Emergency Statistics in England**

I am writing about Accident and Emergency (A&E) Attendances and Admissions statistics in England. These are some of the most high profile statistics across the health and social care system and it is important users can be clear about any limitations of these data.

I continue to welcome your commitment from your [letter of 17 May](#) to include more information from minor injury units and walk-in centres to improve the completeness of the statistics. However, we understand that an unpublished letter about new pathways issued by NHS Improvement on 13 October may be having an impact on recording practice.

The published statistics from October 2017 should be clearer on the impact of changes to recording practice and the interpretation that should be applied by users. Changes in the way that statistics are collected, compiled and presented should be clearly explained, reassuring all users that the production and quality of the published data is trustworthy. This will support better decision making and avoid users reaching misleading conclusions.

We understand that you are planning to achieve some of the required clarity by separately recording these new pathways so the difference between such pathways and pre-existing attendances (types 1, 2, 3 and 4) is transparent.

I welcome the work you are doing to try to deliver a consistent time series and look forward to seeing these improvements. If there is anything my team can do to support these changes, please let me know.

We have also spoken about the possibility of formally assessing A&E statistics against the Code of Practice with a view to their designation as National Statistics. As you are aware, assessing the statistics would support and complement your own developments to the data. National Statistics designation demonstrates that the statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and value, and as such can provide users with confidence in the statistics.

I look forward to continuing our engagement on this important topic.

Yours sincerely



Ed Humpherson  
Director General for Regulation