
Mary Gregory, Deputy Director for Regulation

Ian Knowles
Head of Profession for Statistics
Department for Transport
(by email)

17 September 2018

Dear Ian

STATISTICS FROM THE NATIONAL TRAVEL SURVEY

As you are aware, we recently completed a compliance check review of your National Travel Survey (NTS) statistics against the Code of Practice for Statistics. This letter confirms our findings.

We have concluded that the NTS statistics are produced independently, are of sound quality and offer useful insights to users. Strengths of the NTS include:

- Its well-established methodology, which draws on GSS expertise and uses harmonised coding frames and standards
- Insightful analytical topic reports produced in collaboration with external transport experts
- The positive and constructive relationship with the contractor to help inform understandings of statistical quality, potential innovations and developments
- The positive and active engagement with NTS statistics users about their preferences for changes to the questionnaire
- Transparent explanations of historical methods changes, which are accessibly presented
- The effective management of the balance between innovation to remain relevant and retaining comparability of the NTS series
- Summary quality information and caveats, accessibly and helpfully presented in relevant areas of the statistical narrative
- Excellent signposting to other related statistics

We also note the positive engagement of the NTS statistics team during our review and the subsequent improvements that have been made to the most recent NTS bulletin. These include:

- Highlighting more clearly the policy relevance of the NTS and the inclusion of results from previous DfT research to improve the overall narrative
- Clearly setting out the range of planned NTS developments for users
- Setting out the team's approach to user engagement
- Improving the accessibility and utility of NTS data tables and the presentation of the NTS collection on GOV.UK

We also welcome the statisticians' planned improvements for later in this year, which include:

- A new NTS quality report, capturing existing and internal quality management approaches, confidentiality protection, and updated standard errors and confidence intervals
- A new system for publishing ad hoc NTS analysis as standard, to enable reuse
- Publishing information on users views and experiences of the NTS

I encourage the team to keep users informed about their progress in realising these developments.

I am therefore pleased to confirm the continued designation of NTS statistics as National Statistics. I am copying this letter to John Pullinger, National Statistician, and Darren Stillwell, NTS Lead Statistician.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M. Gregory". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Mary Gregory
Deputy Director for Regulation