



Ministry of
JUSTICE

The Rt Hon Jack Straw MP
Lord Chancellor and
Secretary of State for Justice
102 Petty France
London SW1H 9AJ

T 020 3334 3720
F 020 3334 3669
E general.queries@justice.gsi.gov.uk

www.justice.gov.uk

Sir Michael Scholar KCB
Chair - UK Statistics Authority
Statistics House
Islington
London
EC1R 1UW

UK Statistics Authority
London

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Dear Michael

WITNESS AND VICTIM EXPERIENCE SURVEY (WAVES)

Thank you for your letter of 6 January about the above-named survey. You stated the UK Statistics Authority's view that this survey is an important candidate for National Statistics status.

By way of brief background, the WAVES survey is a national (England and Wales) telephone survey of victims and witnesses (aged 18+) in cases that resulted in a criminal charge. Interviews are conducted on a quarterly basis, with the aim of achieving 38,800 interviews a year. WAVES provides national and local data regarding victims and witnesses' experiences of the Criminal Justice System (CJS), the services they receive (from reporting the crime through to giving evidence and claiming compensation) and their satisfaction with different aspects of the system. It also acts as a measurement tool for the PSA24 victim and witness satisfaction target from the 2007 Spending Review.

The Ministry of Justice is now considering the options for publishing periodic reports from WAVES as official statistics. The exact format, frequency and content of these reports is still to be finalised, but it is likely that they will include analysis of the responses to the question in WAVES relating to levels of satisfaction with the CJS at a national and local level. The first such report is likely to be released in the first half of this calendar year.

I share the view that these reports could be viable candidates for National Statistics status in the medium term. However, I believe that a formal assessment of the reports against the Code of Practice for Official Statistics can best be carried out once a small number of editions have been produced. This will allow the entire production process to have 'bedded in' and for the initial responses of key user groups (including MPs, the media and CJS staff) to be noted and taken on board in the presentation and handling of the statistics. An assessment carried out at this point is likely to obtain a more rounded and stable view of the production process, and to produce conclusions with greater long-term relevance and validity, than one carried out within the next few months.

On this basis, we expect to be in a position in the latter half of the 2009/10 financial year to submit a formal request to the UK Statistics Authority for WAVES outputs to be assessed against the Code of Practice.

I hope the approach outlined above is satisfactory.

*Please revert to me
if not.*

Yours,



JACK STRAW