
Chair of the UK Statistics Authority, Sir Michael Scholar KCB

The Rt Hon Hazel Blears MP
Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London
SW1E 5DU

6 January 2009

Dear Secretary of State

House Price Index

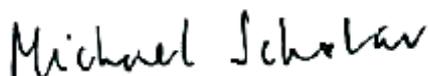
The UK Statistics Authority was established under the *Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007* with a remit to publish a Code of Practice for Statistics and to assess and determine whether official statistics comply with the Code. Those that do comply are designated as 'National Statistics'. Statistics that were already designated under the previous arrangements for National Statistics continue to be designated until such time as they are assessed against the new Code.

The Act requires the Authority to assess other official statistics against the Code of Practice when requested to do so, but the request must come from the relevant Minister, a Northern Ireland department or from the National Statistician (depending on which body produces the statistics). Section 16 of the Act provides that where no such request has been received, but the Authority considers that an assessment would be appropriate, it must notify the relevant Minister and lay a copy of its notification before Parliament.

My purpose in writing to you now is to draw your attention to the above set of official statistics, which is currently undesignated but which we judge to be an important candidate for National Statistics status. We are aware that its status is being considered within CLG and that a request for designation may be forthcoming. Such a request would be welcome and we would not wish to pre-empt it by invoking the procedure set out in section 16 of the Act. We therefore look forward to hearing from you in due course.

For information, I am enclosing a copy of the *Code of Practice for Official Statistics* and a copy of the report *Priorities for Designation as Official Statistics*, which sets out the background to this letter. We will be reviewing undesignated statistics again towards the end of next year, and in some cases where we have not notified Ministers under section 16 on this occasion, we will consider the possibility of doing so again.

Yours sincerely



Sir Michael Scholar KCB

Copies to:
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Janet Dougharty