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**Director General, Monitoring and Assessment, Richard Alldritt**

Professor Valerie Isham  
President  
Royal Statistical Society  
12 Errol Street  
London EC1Y 8LX

22 May 2012

Dear Valerie

**OFFICIAL STATISTICS AND THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR**

I am pleased to enclose a short report by the Statistics Authority which was published recently and sent to the Minister for Civil Society, Nick Hurd MP. It reviews the use of official statistics by the voluntary sector and the adequacy of official statistics about the scale and activities of the sector. We are grateful for the help that James Tucker provided while we researched this topic and drafted the report.

The report concludes (paragraph 19) that the use and potential use of official statistics by the sector would be enhanced by closer engagement between representatives of voluntary bodies and some of the many bodies that produce relevant official statistics. This would help the producer bodies to develop a fuller understanding of the sector's needs; ensure that official statistics are published in ways that are helpful to the sector; and identify unmet statistical requirements which it would be in the public interest to address.

We further conclude (paragraph 25) that the Government needs now to review the adequacy for its own purposes of the statistics it holds about the voluntary sector. We see a shortage of regular and timely data in this area and think it likely that this will inhibit the monitoring of the beneficial impact of the voluntary sector and its contribution to the Big Society and other Government initiatives. The introduction of Payment by Results schemes could further increase the need for reliable data about charities that operate as service providers.

We note (paragraph 26) that the Government has already called, in a recent White Paper, on providers of public services from all sectors to publish information on performance and user satisfaction to improve transparency and to allow the public to make informed choices. This is likely to lead to a greater pool of data which if properly co-ordinated could help produce a coherent national picture and allow the activities and outcomes of voluntary bodies to be compared with others.

And finally, we suggest (paragraph 27) that there would be merit in further discussion of the standards and principles that should apply to the production of statistical data by at least the larger voluntary bodies and would welcome the Statistics Authority's involvement in such discussions.

We are discussing this report with the National Statistician, Jil Matheson, the Office for Civil Society, the National Council for Voluntary Organisations and other relevant organisations. Part of this will be to review how closer engagement between the voluntary sector and the

bodies that produce official statistics can be facilitated. There is a suggestion in the report that the RSS might consider creating a voluntary sector user group (paragraph 22).

We are happy to discuss any aspect of the report with you. I am copying this to Jil Matheson, and to James Tucker.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Alldritt', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**Richard Alldritt**

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**Director General, Monitoring and Assessment, Richard Alldritt**

Sir Stuart Etherington  
Chief Executive  
NCVO  
Regent's Wharf  
8 All Saints Street  
London N1 9RL

22 May 2012

Dear Sir Stuart

**OFFICIAL STATISTICS AND THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR**

I am pleased to enclose a short report by the Statistics Authority which was published recently and sent to the Minister for Civil Society, Nick Hurd MP. It reviews the use of official statistics by the voluntary sector and the adequacy of official statistics about the scale and activities of the sector. We are grateful for the considerable help your research team provided while we researched this topic and drafted the report. We drew on the statistics from NCVO's Almanac in the report - which we found to be a very useful and engaging resource.

The report concludes (paragraph 19) that the use and potential use of official statistics by the sector would be enhanced by closer engagement between representatives of voluntary bodies and some of the many bodies that produce relevant official statistics. This would help the producer bodies to develop a fuller understanding of the sector's needs; ensure that official statistics are published in ways that are helpful to the sector; and identify unmet statistical requirements which it would be in the public interest to address.

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And finally, we suggest (paragraph 27) that there would be merit in further discussion of the standards and principles that should apply to the production of statistical data by at least the larger voluntary bodies and would welcome the Statistics Authority's involvement in such discussions.

With reference to this final conclusion, we wondered whether this might be an agenda that NCVO would be willing to be involved in? If this is something you feel able to do, we would welcome the opportunity to discuss it further with you or your research team. Richard Laux, Director of Monitoring and Assessment, ([richard.laux@statistics.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:richard.laux@statistics.gsi.gov.uk)) would lead on this.

We are discussing this report with the National Statistician, Jil Matheson, the Office for Civil Society, the Royal Statistical Society and other relevant organisations. Part of this will be to review how closer engagement between the voluntary sector and the bodies that produce official statistics can be facilitated.

We are happy to discuss any aspect of the report and would be pleased to engage with you in any way to help take forward its conclusions.

I am copying this to Jil Matheson, and to NCVO colleagues Karl Wilding, Jenny Clark and Joy Dobbs.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

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**Richard Alldritt**

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**Director General, Monitoring and Assessment, Richard Alldritt**

Sir Stephen Bubb  
Chief Executive  
Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations  
1 New Oxford Street  
London WC1A 1NU

6 June 2012

Dear Sir Stephen,

**OFFICIAL STATISTICS AND THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR**

I am pleased to enclose a short report by the Statistics Authority which was published last month and sent to the Minister for Civil Society, Nick Hurd MP. It reviews the use of official statistics by the voluntary sector and the adequacy of official statistics about the scale and activities of the sector.

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and other relevant organisations. Part of this will be to review how closer engagement between the voluntary sector and the bodies that produce official statistics can be facilitated.

We are happy to discuss any aspect of the report with you.

Yours sincerely

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**Richard Alldritt**

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**Director General, Monitoring and Assessment, Richard Alldritt**

Professor Mohan  
Third Sector Research Centre  
Division of Sociology and Social Policy  
School of Social Sciences  
University of Southampton  
Southampton  
SO17 1BH

6 June 2012

Dear Professor Mohan

**OFFICIAL STATISTICS AND THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR**

I am pleased to enclose a short report by the Statistics Authority which was published last month and sent to the Minister for Civil Society, Nick Hurd MP. It reviews the use of official statistics by the voluntary sector and the adequacy of official statistics about the scale and activities of the sector. We are grateful for the help you provided while we were researching this report. In the report we cite the work of the Third Sector Research Centre, referring particularly to the programme of research into 'below the radar' organisations (paragraph 3).

The report concludes (paragraph 19) that the use and potential use of official statistics by the sector would be enhanced by closer engagement between representatives of voluntary bodies and some of the many bodies that produce relevant official statistics. This would help the producer bodies to develop a fuller understanding of the sector's needs; ensure that official statistics are published in ways that are helpful to the sector; and identify unmet statistical requirements which it would be in the public interest to address.

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We are happy to discuss any aspect of the report with you.

Yours sincerely

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**Richard Alldritt**

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**Director General, Monitoring and Assessment, Richard Alldritt**

Justin Forsyth  
Chief Executive  
Save the Children UK  
1 St John's Lane  
London EC1M 4AR

6 June 2012

Dear Mr Forsyth,

**OFFICIAL STATISTICS AND THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR**

I am pleased to enclose a short report by the Statistics Authority which was published last month and sent to the Minister for Civil Society, Nick Hurd MP. It reviews the use of official statistics by the voluntary sector and the adequacy of official statistics about the scale and activities of the sector. We are grateful for the help that your Northern Ireland office provided while we researched this topic and drafted the report.

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**Richard Alldritt**

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**Director General, Monitoring and Assessment, Richard Alldritt**

Lesley-Anne Alexander  
Chief Executive  
Royal National Institute for Blind People  
105 Judd Street  
London WC1H 9NE

6 June 2012

Dear Ms Alexander,

**OFFICIAL STATISTICS AND THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR**

I am pleased to enclose a short report by the Statistics Authority which was published last month and sent to the Minister for Civil Society, Nick Hurd MP. It reviews the use of official statistics by the voluntary sector and the adequacy of official statistics about the scale and activities of the sector. We are grateful for the help that your organisation provided while we researched this topic and drafted the report.

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**Director General, Monitoring and Assessment, Richard Alldritt**

Campbell Robb  
Chief Executive  
Shelter Scotland  
6 South Charlotte Street  
Edinburgh EH2 4AW

6 June 2012

Dear Mr Robb,

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**Director General, Monitoring and Assessment, Richard Alldritt**

Tom Wright CBE  
Chief Executive  
Tavis House  
1-6 Tavistock Square  
London WC1H 9NA

6 June 2012

Dear Mr Wright,

**OFFICIAL STATISTICS AND THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR**

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**Director General, Monitoring and Assessment, Richard Alldritt**

Martin Sime  
Chief Executive  
Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations  
Mansfield Traquair Centre  
15 Mansfield Place  
Edinburgh EH3 6NB

6 June 2012

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