
Chair of the UK Statistics Authority, Sir Andrew Dilnot CBE

Glen Watson
Director General
Office for National Statistics
NEWPORT
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25 June 2014

Dear Glen,

UK TRADE STATISTICS: APRIL 2014

Thank you for your letter dated 25 June in reply to my letter to you dated 18 June regarding the Statistical Bulletin *UK Trade, April 2014* and Trade in Goods estimates that were underestimated by about £700m because of an error in data supplied by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC). Based on the assurances that you have given to me, that the errors have now been corrected in the published statistics, I can confirm that the Authority is content to reinstate the National Statistics designation for the April 2014 Statistical Bulletin.

In my letter dated 18 June I also set out that the Authority wished to see some additional work set in train quickly to make quality assurance more rigorous, given that this and an earlier error in a previous Statistical Bulletin was caused by data provided by HMRC. In particular, I said that that I would appreciate advice on (i) HMRC's plans to strengthen their quality assurance - for example by undertaking, as part of their standard approach, the 'further' checks that led to the error being identified; and (ii) the desirability of receiving microdata rather than aggregate data. I appreciate that this work is still underway and I look forward to an update on progress from you soon.

I am copying this to Lin Homer, Chief Executive of HMRC; John Pullinger, National Statistician-designate; and Ed Humpherson, the Authority's Head of Assessment.

Yours sincerely,



Sir Andrew Dilnot CBE