
Chair of the UK Statistics Authority, Sir Michael Scholar KCB

Rt. Hon. Andrew Lansley CBE MP
Secretary of State for Health
Department of Health
Richmond House
79 Whitehall
LONDON
SW1A 2NS

3 November 2011

Dear Secretary of State

STATISTICS AND REGISTRATION SERVICE ACT 2007: NOTIFICATION IN RELATION TO STATISTICS ON *SUBSTANCE MISUSE AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE* AND *STATISTICS FROM THE NATIONAL ALCOHOL TREATMENT MONITORING SYSTEM* PRODUCED BY THE NATIONAL TREATMENT AGENCY FOR SUBSTANCE MISUSE

The UK Statistics Authority has today published an Assessment Report on *Statistics on Drug Treatment*, covering National Statistics from the National Drug Treatment Monitoring System, and the monthly reports from the NDTMS.

I would draw your attention in particular to the 15 formal requirements we have placed on the National Treatment Agency for Substance Misuse (NTA) and the timetable for meeting those requirements. These include one to confirm that a statistical head of profession has sole responsibility for the content of statistical releases and one to ensure that the presentation and commentary in the statistical releases are impartial and policy neutral. These are fundamental requirements under the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. If you have any reservations about compliance with these points, I would be grateful if those could be communicated directly to me.

This letter is also notification under section 16 of the *Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007*, which states that:

- (1) Where in the case of any official statistics other than statistics produced by the Board:
 - (a) the appropriate authority has not under section 12(1) requested the Board to assess and determine whether the Code of Practice for Statistics has been complied with, and
 - (b) the Board is of the view that it would be appropriate for it to do so, the Board must notify the appropriate authority accordingly.
- (2) Where the appropriate authority is a Minister of the Crown, the Board must lay a copy of its notification under subsection (1) before Parliament.

I understand that you are the appropriate authority for the statistics produced by the NTA. The statistics referenced in the title of this letter are not currently designated as National Statistics and are not therefore subject to formal assessment against the Code of Practice.

I am writing to let you know that we are of the view that statistics on *Substance Misuse among Young People* and statistics from the National Alcohol Treatment Monitoring System

should also be assessed against the Code with a view to designation. Paragraph 1.1.3 of our Report, enclosed, provides further information on why this notification is necessary.

In accordance with subsections (3) to (5) of section 16 of the Act, I would be grateful if you could now provide me with one of the following:

- a statement that you intend to make a request for assessment under section 12(1), including a timetable for making the request; or
- a statement that you do not intend making such a request, giving your reasons.

A copy of this notification is being laid before Parliament in accordance with section 16(2) above. Section 16(3) of the Act requires that a copy of your statement in response to this notification should also be laid before Parliament.

Yours sincerely

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

Sir Michael Scholar KCB