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Dear Andrew,

You wrote on 9 May to my Secretary of State.

You asked for further assurance that the working arrangements within the Department give sufficient weight to the professional role and public responsibilities of statisticians. Your request was in the context of a finding that the Department had not fully complied with the principles of the Code of Practice, in its release of two short statistical reports on 12 April.

I can assure you, and would be happy for the National Statistician to review this with my Head of Profession, that the working arrangements with DWP are designed properly to reflect the statisticians' professional obligations.

The majority of our statistics are available in **regularly published** reports or via our on-line statistical tabulation tool. Most have been accredited by the Authority as meeting the standards for National Statistics and the rest are in scope for assessment.

The Department has, in our view, made a significant effort to ensure that **ad hoc** material, which is not accessible via our regular Statistics, is treated as far as is possible in a way consistent with the Code. In 2010 we introduced new procedures that were agreed at that time with the UK Statistics Authority to make sure that all such statistics used in public by DWP Ministers and officials are accessible to everyone outside of DWP. This is done by the production of an ad hoc statistical report, prepared by DWP analysts using guidance prepared by DWP's Head of Profession for statistics, who also oversees the process. This includes giving a technical description about how the statistics were prepared and other help with interpretation. These reports are then published on a dedicated page on the statistics section of the DWP website, separate from any Ministerial or departmental statements on them. No other department was doing anything like this at that time.

That said, the National Statistician's guidance on Identifying Official Statistics recognises that it will not always be possible for an ad hoc release to meet all of the practices that are set out in the Code. That is in the very nature of an ad hoc release; and why the guidance suggests the Head of Profession should be involved in decisions if the Code cannot be applied fully.

In the case you cite, the reports were prepared and released with appropriate involvement from DWP analysts, using guidance and procedures referred to above. I am sorry that you nonetheless regard the result as not fully compliant. I have asked my Head of Profession to discuss this case with the National Statistician, and develop a clearer sense of when we should all expect the Code to be applied in full; and in what circumstances it is reasonable for the Department to use the existing recognition that this cannot be "one size fits all" circumstances.

Yours sincerely,

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