

Mr E Humpherson  
Director General for Regulation  
UK Statistics Authority  
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Dear Ed

With your support, we are working with other national producers of health and care statistics to develop our collective output to be as useful and coherent as possible. NHS Digital is looking to move to a smaller, more focused portfolio of National Statistics that covers key series of significant public value, in addition to quality and trustworthiness. Other statistical series will have their production resourced in line with user need, ensuring analytical capacity is deployed to the areas with the greatest positive impact. Last year's public consultation on all of our statistics products was the first step on a journey towards this and we will look for further opportunities through our work with other national producers and users.

Through analysis of usage information and discussion with users, we have identified *General Ophthalmic Services activity statistics* as being a series with a small, specialist user base that would have its needs well met by tables of data, together with information around quality, rather than a broader discursive report.

Alongside this, there are some immediate data quality issues that have recently become apparent and mean that we need to act in advance of the next publication which is due out in July. Previous publications have been produced using data captured centrally as a by-product of processing payments to providers, allowing granular breakdowns around sight tests and optical vouchers. However, following changes to the payment processing, data are not now captured at a claim level consistently across the country by the payment processing provider. Plans are in place to implement systems which will enable the capturing of this information in future, but in the meantime we can only make a more limited set of aggregate information available, highlighting quality issues. We have started engagement with key users on this and hope to engage more widely following your response to this letter.

For these two reasons, we would like to invite you to agree to remove the National Statistics status from subsequent publications of these statistics, so we instead release them as Management Information. In doing so, we propose that the information will comply with all elements of the Code of Practice where possible and appropriate to do so, and we will highlight any quality issues as part of the report.

Yours sincerely



Chris Roebuck  
Director of Publications and Head of Profession for Statistics