
Ed Humpherson, Director General for Regulation

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Dear Tom

ASSESSMENT OF STATISTICS ON PUBLIC SECTOR FINANCES

Thank you for the correspondence outlining the actions that have been taken to address the requirements in Assessment Report number 316 about the Public Sector Finances.

On behalf of the Board of the Statistics Authority, the Office for Statistics Regulation has reviewed these actions and I am pleased to confirm the designation as National Statistics of *Public Sector Finances* and *UK government debt and deficit*.

Following the publication of the Bean Review and a renewed energy to ONS economic statistics from April 2016, the statisticians have worked hard to systematically meet the Requirements. Public Sector Finances is a joint publication with HM Treasury and I am pleased to see the collaborative working that generated the documentation of the quality assurance processes that are applied to the statistics. The material contains an excellent summary and explanation of the research and engagement with suppliers that the teams in HM Treasury and ONS undertook. The summary includes a good explanation of the assurance levels and should provide reassurance for users. This is an example of best practice regarding the quality assurance of administrative data and both ONS and HM Treasury can be proud of their work.

In line with other ONS economic bulletins, *Public Sector Finances* has been reviewed and much improved to add more value to public discourse. I commend the efforts made by all involved and I am confident in the commitment of the statisticians to continue to meet changing user demands for these statistics.

National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and value and is something to be celebrated. For future releases, we invite you to include a statement alongside the statistics which reflects the National Statistics status. You may wish to base your statement on the boilerplate text attached to this letter.

Please feel free to discuss any aspect of this with us at any time. I am copying this letter to John Pullinger, the National Statistician, Jonathan Athow, Deputy National Statistician, and Derek Bird and David Bailey at ONS.

Yours sincerely



Ed Humpherson

Text that may only be used in publications that carry the National Statistics logo following assessment and designation:

NATIONAL STATISTICS STATUS

National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value.

All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the *Code of Practice for Official Statistics*. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the Office for Statistics Regulation. The Office for Statistics Regulation considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate.

It is HM Treasury's and ONS's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected of National Statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with the Office for Statistics Regulation. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.

