
Director General for Regulation

Dr Ben Dean
(By email)

17 July 2017

Dear Dr Dean,

Thank-you for your recent letter, in which you sought the Authority's view on the degree to which the Review Body on Doctors' and Dentists' Remuneration (DDRB) had complied with the *Code of Practice for Official Statistics* in its July 2015 report on seven-day service provision.¹ We have in the past commented publicly on broader questions around weekend excess mortality in the NHS in England². This letter focuses on the specific question of the source of data quoted in Table 2.1 of the July 2015 report.

I should clarify in the first instance that this report is not an official statistics publication. As such, the Review Body is under no formal obligation to comply with the *Code of Practice for Official Statistics*. Nonetheless, the Authority encourages compliance with the high standards of the *Code of Practice* wherever data are being used to inform decision-making.

A key principle of the *Code of Practice* is that statistics, sources and underlying methodology should be made equally accessible to all. In the context of the DDRB's report on seven-day working, we note that Table 2.1 of the document was based on unpublished analyses provided by NHS England, which were not available for wider scrutiny at the time the report was itself published.

I have written to the Office for Manpower Economics to recommend that the DDRB, and the other pay review bodies, in future should check whether the sources of evidence presented to them are in the public domain; provide fuller citation details, including links to supporting data; and in particular make clearer where data quoted in their reports are unpublished.

Yours sincerely



Ed Humpherson
Director General for Regulation

¹ Review Body on Doctors' and Dentists' Remuneration (2015): *Contract reform for consultants and doctors and dentists in training – supporting healthcare services seven days a week*

² https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/letterfromedhumphersonstomarksvenson24071_tcm97-44746.pdf;
https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/images-letterfromsirandrewdilnottocd03121_tcm97-45051.pdf; <https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Email-from-Ed-Humpherson-to-Inas-Ahmed-090316.pdf>