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Office for Statistics Regulation  
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Dear Ed

#### HOSPITAL STANDARDISED MORTALITY STATISTICS

Thank you for your letter of 24<sup>th</sup> April 2018 relating to the above publication. I have discussed with Roger Halliday, Chief Statistician at the Scottish Government, and this letter outlines the steps we have taken to address your concerns.

#### HSMR Publication

Your letter acknowledges that the HSMR publication released by ISD is clear and conforms with the Code of Practice for Statistics. You highlighted that we could be clearer in our explanation about the figures that are derived from the regression model and noted that the ISD team intended to address this in the next release. The latest HSMR publication was published on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> May and the team have added further explanation about the regression model within the main publication report (page 8), the summary report (new paragraph added to the background information) and have added additional data to Table 2 to provide further clarity on how the percentage change for each hospital is calculated.

#### Scottish Government Press Release

Your letter noted that the Scottish Government press release on the HSMR publication fell short on the plausible reasons for the fall in hospital mortality. It is important to respect the right of those commenting on statistics to develop their own narrative around statistical findings (supported by statistical evidence) and also for Scottish Ministers to defend the record of the Scottish Government. However, to address your points, Scottish Government statisticians have met with policy and communications officials to discuss the content of press releases and will continue to work closely together to ensure they promote trust in statistics by:

- Ensuring statements around attributions are worded appropriately and caveated if required
- Ensuring that we are clear about any differences that exist when using any components or underlying data sources, checking with the statistics producer (in this case, ISD) in the first instance if there are any uncertainties
- Adding links or detail to background notes in press releases to highlight any relevant assumptions that have been made and/or, if appropriate, provide any contextual information.

If you have any further questions about this publication or our response to your concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me or Roger.

Yours sincerely



Scott Heald  
Head of Profession for Statistics



Chair	Professor Elizabeth Ireland
Chief Executive	Colin Sinclair
Director	Phillip Couser MBE

*NHS National Services Scotland is the common name of the Common Services Agency for the Scottish Health Service.*