
Mary Gregory, Deputy Director for Regulation

Jon Simmons
Deputy Director for Migration and Border Analysis
Home Office Analysis and Insight
(by email)

3 September 2018

Dear Jon

STATISTICS ON IMMIGRATION

As you are aware, we recently completed our check of the compliance with the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#) of the Home Office's [immigration statistics](#). This letter confirms that the Home Office migration statistics should continue to be designated as National Statistics.

We initiated this check given the importance of the statistics and the significant time since [Assessment 177](#) in 2012, after which the designation as National Statistics was confirmed. We considered the Trustworthiness, Quality and Value of the immigration statistics in relation to the Code.

The Home Office's immigration statistics team demonstrates independent statistical production in a topic area of great interest to policy and public debate. The Home Office ensures orderly release, presenting the immigration statistics both impartially and objectively. The coordinated release of the Home Office immigration statistics with other migration statistics, as part of the Migration Statistics Quarterly Release (MSQR), is an essential means to ensuring the appropriate understanding of migration.

We welcome that Home Office has published a [statement of compliance](#) with the Code as a useful way of publicly demonstrating the Department's commitments. We welcome the decision to update the statement to reflect the new Code.

Additional strengths of the immigration statistics include:

- Specific quality issues are highlighted in the statistical output, and the [user guide](#) has clear information about the quality of the various data sources, methods and quality assurance. The user guide also highlights the purpose and use of the immigration statistics.
- Helpful descriptions are given alongside the statistics, structured around the main questions that users may be seeking to answer. The illustration of the framework of the immigration system supports users in understanding the various data sources and statistics to the processes involved.
- Informing users about improvements to the immigration statistics, as set out in your [recent statement](#) describing efforts since 2010, and the development of the exit check data.
- An active, positive role in supporting developments: your commitment to the cross-government group and leadership of the Migration Statistics User Group is a good example of collaboration and engagement for other producers.

There are five areas where we see potential improvement of these statistics:

1. Clearer signposting to the Office for National Statistics' long-term international migration statistics and the MSQR.
2. More prominent attention given to quality of the latest statistics alongside the figures in the statistical output.

3. Explanation of the value of the immigration statistics by outlining the use made of each of the various statistics within the statistical output, to support their re-use.
4. Clearer explanation of the relevance (or not) of the immigration statistics to understand the impact the UK's departure from the European Union as a topic of strong public interest.
5. Ongoing briefing for users on development plans and progress.

Thank you for engaging effectively with us during this short review. I would welcome updates from you as your work proceeds. Please let me know if there is any aspect of this letter that you wish to discuss.

I am copying this letter to David Blunt, Home Office Head of Profession for Statistics, and Bex Newell, Head of Migration Statistics.

Yours sincerely

Mary Gregory
Deputy Director for Regulation