
Director General for Regulation

John Pullinger
National Statistician
(By email)

11 September 2018

Dear John

The Office for Statistics Regulation this week published its review of the UK statistics system's ability to provide greater insight to users via linked data: *Joining Up Data for Better Statistics*.

Data linkage should be a vital component of the official statistics landscape. The Digital Economy Act (DEA) 2017 provides a clear legal framework for sharing data for statistics production and statistical research. Users' aspirations within and beyond government are high and their demand is clear: make this work.

The report highlights excellent examples of linkage, from different parts of the UK. It is also clear that, through ONS's data services work, there is more in the pipeline.

Overall, however, the report concludes that value is being squandered because linkage does not take place as much as it should. The good news is that there is a strong coalition of organisations and leaders wanting to take this forward, both inside the GSS and outside government.

We identify six areas where actions are required to ensure that the UK has a safe and effective data linkage system to support statistics production and statistical research. You intend to respond on behalf of the UK statistics system to the detailed recommendations included in the report with an action plan by the end of 2018, and I am very grateful for your commitment.

We recognise that the responsibility for delivering some of the specific points lies with other parties, including OSR and crucially, those actors outside of the statistical system. We therefore expect to play a part in facilitating your response and helping to deliver the overall vision set out in the report.

Your sincerely



Ed Humpherson
Director General for Regulation