

---

**Director General for Regulation**

Richard Heaton  
Permanent Secretary  
Ministry of Justice

23<sup>rd</sup> October 2018

Dear Richard

The Office for Statistics Regulation has published a review of the UK statistics system's ability to provide greater insight to users via linked data: [Joining Up Data for Better Statistics](#). It identifies six outcomes designed to ensure that the UK has a safe and effective data linkage system to support statistics production and statistical research. The key outcome, underpinning all others, is a system that demonstrates its trustworthiness as a custodian of public data and uses this as a platform to deliver insights about important issues. The UK's National Statistician, John Pullinger, will be responding to the recommendations in the report with an action plan by the end of 2018.

Data linkage should be a vital component of the official statistics landscape. There are huge opportunities to be gained from making this happen. 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.

Our report includes positive examples of the Ministry of Justice's valuable data being used to deliver unique insights about children and adults in England when linked with other sources using secure and ethical processes. The steps you have been taking to increase the value of data via the Justice Data Lab are another development that we were pleased to champion in the report.

We hope to see departments being enthusiastic supporters of all data access requests that meet the public interest criteria set out in the DEA.

I am copying this letter to John Pullinger, National Statistician, and John Marais, Acting Head of Profession for Statistics, Ministry of Justice.

Your sincerely



Ed Humpherson  
Director General for Regulation