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Dear Ed

National Statistics designation for Social Service publications

I am writing to update you regarding the suspension of the National Statistics designation for some of our Social Services publications last year.

As previously proposed the 2016-17 data returns were published in autumn 2017 as experimental statistics. Reporting requirements remained largely unchanged for 2017-18, with the only change being to relax the methodology for qualitative performance measures thus allowing local authorities flexibility in how they collect the data. Detailed accompanying guidance was made available to data providers for all returns which reflected the greater clarity gained throughout the first year of reporting.

Statisticians continue to support and work with local authority contacts to resolve queries, and are currently quality assuring and finalising data for the 2017-18 reporting year. Some progress has been made in improving consistency in understanding of data requirements and the issues of a change in policy and new data collection system requirements have been less apparent in this second year. However, the roll-out of the Welsh Community Care Information System (WCCIS) is continuing to impact on ability to make information available as more local authorities adopt the new system.

Furthermore, policy officials are currently reviewing the data requirements in relation to measuring the impact that the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act is having on people who need care and support and carers who need support. It is intended that new performance measures will be in place for April 2020 and new underpinning activity data will



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be developed to support these measures for reporting from 2020-21 onwards. We are actively involved in this work and are taking the opportunity to hear from key users of our data.

For the collections introduced in 2016-17, data will continue to be published at a Wales level with no accompanying sub-national detail where the quality is not sufficient. Quantitative performance information will be published at Wales level with averages and quartile boundaries from the local authority data to allow local authorities to make their own judgement on where they are relative to other authorities.

Given the change in methodology for qualitative performance measures and the impact this will have on the quality in terms of comparability and usefulness of the data, we have decided not to publish this information for 2017-18. Policy officials will be reviewing people's comments received alongside the qualitative returns with a view to producing a report highlighting the key themes that have emerged.

In light of continuing data availability issues, and the potential change for collections again in the near future, I have not sought re-designation of the publications this year. We will persist in improving the quality of returns and update you of likely changes, with the aim of working with your team in assessing the designation of these statistics in due course.

More recently we took the decision to postpone publication of some of our Social Services publications. This was mainly because of difficulties for local authorities to provide us with data from WCCIS and the need for more time to process and quality assure data due to resource pressures. Key users were informed of postponement and revised publication dates have since been pre-announced.

I would be happy to discuss any of this further if you would like more details.

Yours sincerely



Glyn Jones

Chief Statistician