
Director General for Regulation

Iain Bell
Deputy National Statistician
Office for National Statistics
(By email)

22 November 2018

Dear Iain

ASSESSMENT OF ONS AVOIDABLE MORTALITY STATISTICS

Thank you for inviting us to assess ONS's Avoidable Mortality statistics against the Code of Practice for Statistics. We have completed the assessment and have today published our Assessment Report. I am grateful for the positive contribution of your staff, for their engagement throughout the assessment process, and for their proactive approach to addressing many of our requirements prior to publication.

Avoidable mortality statistics estimate the burden of deaths from causes that could have been prevented via good quality healthcare or public health measures. The value of these statistics to users is clear: public health analysts, policy makers in government, academics and organisations representing specific health conditions spoke to us about the ways they use them to inform their work. Our report highlights many examples of good practice as identified in the assessment. In particular:

- It is clear that the team producing these statistics are experienced professionals who exercise sound judgement, particularly around complex decisions about definitions;
- There has been extensive input from users to the definitions applied and analyses conducted since the statistics were first introduced;
- The information provided about the methods used to produce the statistics is clear;
- There have been welcome developments to the statistics to increase their value;
- We recognise the team's efforts to speed-up the production of the statistics to better meet user needs; and
- We welcome the plans for Census data-linkage to expand the insights that can be provided by the statistics.

We identified a number of improvements to the statistics in the course of the assessment that the team has already actioned. These include establishing a new Avoidable Mortality Stakeholder Interest Group to ensure a more coordinated approach to user engagement which should enable further value to be added by these statistics.

We judge that the ONS Avoidable Mortality statistics can be designated as National Statistics once we have confirmed that the three requirements set out in the report have been met. This will demonstrate that your statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value and comply with the Code of Practice for Statistics. You are due to report back to us by 1 February 2019 outlining how you have addressed the Requirements.

Please feel free to discuss any aspect of this with me or my team at any time.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ed Humpherson', written in a cursive style.

Ed Humpherson
Director General for Regulation