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**Director General for Regulation**

Iain Bell  
Deputy National Statistician for Population and Public Policy  
Office for National Statistics  
(by email)

1 March 2019

Dear Iain,

**CONFIRMATION OF NATIONAL STATISTICS DESIGNATION FOR ONS AVOIDABLE MORTALITY STATISTICS**

We have reviewed the action that your team has taken to address the requirements in [Assessment Report 339: Statistics on Avoidable Mortality](#).

On behalf of the Board of the UK Statistics Authority, I am pleased to confirm the National Statistics designation of these statistics. The attached Annex contains more detail about our judgement.

My letter in [November](#) outlining the three requirements for your team to meet highlighted the positive and proactive contributions of your statisticians throughout the assessment process. I am pleased to note that they were equally engaged and conscientious throughout the meeting requirements phase. They have been particularly keen to simplify and improve users' access to information about the avoidable mortality statistics. We encourage the statistics team to work with colleagues in ONS publishing to continue looking for ways to ensure that all users' needs are met.

National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and value and is something to be celebrated. We invite you to include a statement alongside the statistics which reflects their new National Statistics status and your ongoing aspirations for them.

Your sincerely,



Ed Humpherson

Director General for Regulation

**Annex: Review of actions taken in response to Assessment Report 339 on ONS Avoidable Mortality statistics**

<b>Requirement</b>	<b>Actions taken by ONS to meet Requirements</b>	<b>Office for Statistics Regulation's evaluation of evidence in meeting Requirements</b>
<p>Ensure that users can easily locate all relevant Avoidable Mortality information on the ONS website.</p>	<p>The article socioeconomic inequalities in avoidable mortality has been added to the page 'publications related to causes of death' as requested.</p> <p>A direct link to the avoidable mortality definition consultation document is now available via the bulletin.</p>	<p>We judge that ONS has met this Requirement. Based on our conversations with stakeholders, the current ONS website structure does not always meet user needs. Locating all the materials related to a specific topic can require some navigation from document to document, or using the website's search function. We encourage the statistics team, in collaboration with colleagues in ONS publishing, to continue enhancing their users' experience of using the website.</p>
<p>Put processes in place for maintaining continuity of expert clinical and public health advice to ensure that there would be no material impact on data quality if a change of advisor were to occur, or if they were temporarily unavailable.</p>	<p>An additional expert advisor has been identified and has agreed to take on this role if required in future. They have published widely on this topic and recently guided the OECD in their deliberations to develop an international harmonised definition of avoidable mortality.</p>	<p>This Requirement has been met.</p>
<p>Fulfil commitments to provide further information about how the definition of avoidable mortality differs from hospital avoidable deaths, update the QMI, and clarify how small numbers of deaths are handled.</p>	<p>Additional text about hospital avoidable deaths has been added to the two most recent bulletins, and this has been flagged in a notice at the top of the page as well.</p> <p>An updated QMI was published on 1 February 2019 with new information about how deaths of non-residents are handled in each country, registration periods, and how small numbers are handled in analyses.</p>	<p>This Requirement has been met. We recommend that the information about hospital avoidable deaths continues to be included in the main bulletin text when the 2017 statistics are released.</p>