



Ministry  
of Justice

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(by email)

15 May 2019

Dear Mark

## **COURT STATISTICS**

Thank you for your recent review of three sets of Ministry of Justice's statistics and data:

- Criminal Court Statistics Quarterly;
- Family Court Statistics Quarterly; and
- Civil Justice Statistics Quarterly

and for confirming the publications' ongoing compliance with the Code of Practice for Statistics. The due diligence you provide forms the foundation of our work to continuously maintain and improve the standards of the National Statistics publications.

With regards to the potential developments and improvements your review has highlighted, we accept the potential value of your suggestions. As discussed when we met with OSR colleagues in February, we have already taken steps to implement improvements in some areas, including:

- Reviewing the content of the Statistical Policies and Procedures documents on gov.uk to bring them up to date and reflect the revised content of the Code of Practice for Statistics. Updated versions will be loaded onto gov.uk shortly.
- Ensuring publications have clear and transparent advice on revisions and their impact (if any), as well as signposting to the Revisions Statement document.
- Revising the user guide documentation that accompanies each bulletin to provide greater clarity on court processes and definitions of technical terms to increase public value and extend the reach of the statistics.
- Where possible, we have extended commentary to give broader context to the statistics, particularly in relation to court processes and operations, and provided longer term trends alongside short-term changes.

- Having carried out an initial assessment against the Quality Assurance of Administrative Data (QAAD), we have identified improvements to be made to our quality assurance procedures.

In order to address the remaining recommendations, we will ensure that further developments and improvements are incorporated into the work programmes for not only the bulletins within the scope of this review, but across all our statistical publications. In particular:

### **Transparency**

- By March 2020, we will continue to extend our range of data visualisation tools with an aim of developing a tool to accompany the Civil Justice Statistics Quarterly bulletin. Feedback from users suggest that these are a welcome addition to our publication products which enable them to interrogate data at a lower level and produce bespoke analyses of specific interest to them.
- By June 2019, we will publish an updated, open and transparent Revisions Statement, both as part of our Statistics Policies and Procedures and within each statistical bulletin where handling of revisions may be specific to a publication or set of source data.

### **Value**

- We fully accept the need to ensure users are regularly consulted so that the information provided in the publication meets their needs. This activity takes place at regular intervals with internal stakeholders, which includes policy and operational colleagues, who provide robust challenge and useful additional context based on their knowledge of the business. We are now looking to expand this to the external community through a series of planned engagement events throughout the year.
- We acknowledge the value in providing further context alongside existing commentary – we will continue to develop this in consultation with our stakeholders to ensure our statistics meet their and MOJ's needs.

### **Quality**

- We will implement the improvements to our quality assurance procedures identified by the light touch QAAD assessment by March 2020.
- We will develop a Statement of Quality to accompany each statistical bulletin – this will outline the processes we take to verify the quality of data, including work with data suppliers, i.e. HMCTS and others, to assess data quality at source. These will be clearly signposted within the body of the bulletin and on the relevant gov.uk landing page. We aim for these to be completed for every bulletin by March 2020.
- To ensure an increased focus on delivering quality, we will ensure all staff involved in the production of National and Official Statistics products undergo the Quality Statistics in Government course combined with the Quality Assurance of Administrative Data workshop training (initial training arranged in consultation with GSS Quality Centre in June for key staff members who will then disseminate).

I would like to thank you and your team again for the valuable assurance provided, and look forward to working with you in the future to enhance the content and perception of the statistical publications that we produce.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further detail with regards to the response provided.

Yours sincerely

David Blunt  
Deputy Director for Justice Statistics  
Chief Statistician and Head of Profession for Statistics