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**Ed Humpherson, Director General for Regulation**

Glyn Jones  
Chief Statistician  
Welsh Government  
(by email)

30 September 2019

Dear Glyn

**OSR Review of the Public Value of Devolved Public Finance statistics**

OSR recently concluded [a review](#) of the public value of public finance statistics for the devolved administrations (DAs) and the regions. The complexity of new fiscal frameworks and the associated need to make public finance statistics for the DAs and the regions more easily understood was one of the factors that prompted us to conduct our review. We welcomed the input that you and your colleagues provided to this review.

We undertook the review in two parts, the first focused on the coherence and transparency of devolved public finance statistics and the second focused on statistics on public sector investment for DAs alone. The outputs from the review are all available on our website and linked via the associated [blog](#) we published. The review also helped to augment an assessment we conducted of HM Treasury's Public Expenditure Statistical Analysis: [Country and Regional Analysis statistics](#) and the assessment report can be found at [this link](#).

One of the review recommendations is that ONS should work with DAs to develop more compelling narratives from the data through designing presentation to suit the internet and deploying better platforms to present other parties' analysis using ONS data after release. I know that ONS has started that discussion with the DAs and others and we would be very grateful for any assistance that you and your colleagues could offer to ONS in implementing this recommendation. I was very much encouraged to see that an [inaugural Wales Fiscal Analysis](#) conference was held at the start of July in Cardiff followed by the publication of the second [Government Expenditure and Revenue Wales report 2019](#) based on ONS Country and Regional Public Sector Finance data. This is an example of exactly the kind of initiative that we encouraged in our review

In a second phase of the review we focused particularly on statistics on public sector investments for DAs; we published the findings in a second presentation and a link can be found [here](#). Generally, across the DAs we found a mixed response to introducing better public sector investment data in the different nations. In Wales we found some interest (and some data) from for example the Wales Audit Office and from CIPFA Wales. We were very interested in the progress being made by the Wales Future Generations Commissioner on [budget spend and preventative spend](#).

Overall, we took the view that within the next five years DAs should consider developing statistics and data to illuminate how government assets and liabilities have a significant impact on wellbeing. But we also counselled that before DAs made such data available, they should consider how best to develop a community of interest with bodies interested in how devolved public finance can sharpen people's understanding of how public assets lead to improved living standards. We would be happy to share more about our findings and the bodies who expressed interest in these data.

I would welcome your feedback on our review and would be really interested to hear your take on the development of such statistics in Wales over the medium term, ideally by the end of October if possible.

I am copying this letter to David Bailey Head of Public Sector Division at ONS and Tom Orford, Head of Statistics Profession at HM Treasury.

Yours sincerely

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

Ed Humpherson  
Director General for Regulation