
Mark Pont, Assessment Programme Lead

Siobhan Carey, CBE
Chief Executive and Registrar General
Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency

5 November 2019

Dear Siobhan

STATISTICS FROM THE NORTHERN IRELAND SAFE COMMUNITY SURVEY

This letter updates our review of compliance with the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#) for the [Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey](#). In this part of the work, we focused on data collection and the quality of statistics. We also reviewed the extent to which the team has met the recommendations from our previous [compliance check](#). These compliance checks form part of a series of reviews, the last of which will focus on the reporting of the statistics. Once complete, we will then publish an overall report of our assessment of the statistics from the Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey, which we aim to do in spring 2020. Overall, the package of work will consider trustworthiness, quality and value, all of which are fundamental to supporting public confidence in statistics and, together, form the basis of the Code.

The first compliance check highlighted that the team should demonstrate trustworthiness, ensuring resources are sufficient for the ongoing improvement of quality and to realise the potential value of the statistics. We were pleased to see that the team has recently recruited a new member to provide more resource to develop the statistics further; we look forward to seeing the statistics continue to improve as a result. We were also encouraged to see that the team has published a [future work programme](#), showing transparency around unmet demand. Once the new team member is in post, we look forward to you firming up timescales, which would be helpful so that users can better understand when improvements are going to be finished.

We previously identified the need to understand child victimisation. We welcome the team's commitment to publish a scoping paper looking into this area. This is an important issue and it was positive to see questions being included in the Young Persons' Behaviour and Attitudes Survey as part of an effort to understand the nature of child victimisation more fully.

We were assured of the quality of the statistics and commend the team for working closely with our regulators and making changes to the quality and user guide throughout the course of our compliance check. Given the changes in the sample size we were encouraged to see the work that has been done to ensure the integrity of the long-term crime trend. The inclusion of confidence intervals so that users can understand the quality of the estimates more fully when results are published.

We were pleased to see the willingness of the team to engage with users and to collaborate with producers of similar statistics. We welcome that the team is currently holding an internal working group with policy colleagues and has quarterly meetings with producers from the Office for National Statistics and Scottish Government. We recommend that the team should publish findings from its user survey to ensure transparency and to enable further continued improvement to the statistics.

Our Crime and Security domain lead will continue to liaise with staff at the Department of Justice throughout these developments, and in planning the last phase of our work. I look forward to seeing the trustworthiness, quality and value of the statistics continue to improve.

I am copying this letter to Tracy Power, Director of Analysis NISRA; and to Joan Ritchie, Department of Justice.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Pont', with a horizontal line underneath.

Mark Pont
Assessment Programme Lead