
Ed Humpherson, Director General for Regulation

Chris Roebuck
Chief Statistician
NHS Digital
(by email)

03 March 2020

Dear Chris

Thank you for your letter of 19 February setting out the situation regarding your General Ophthalmic Workforce statistics. I am grateful to you for publicly consulting with your users and for reflecting on the meaning of National Statistics status in the light of the questions over data completeness, coverage and the forthcoming changes to the source of data for these statistics.

Your letter raised the issue of whether it would be better for these statistics to be published as official statistics, without the National Statistics designation. Designation of official statistics as National Statistics shows that the statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and value. I, therefore, agree with you that the General Ophthalmic Workforce statistics should now be regarded as official statistics.

I welcome your plans to highlight the data quality issues to users when you next publish the statistics, and to continue to work closely with data suppliers and stakeholders to improve the quality and reliability of future publications. I would encourage you to also clearly explain the rationale for the decision to present the statistics as official statistics.

Our domain team for health and social care statistics will keep in touch as the work develops. Please let me know if there is any aspect of this letter that you wish to discuss.

Yours sincerely



Ed Humpherson
Director General for Regulation