
Mark Pont, Assessment Programme Lead

Michael Thompson
Principal Statistician
Department for Infrastructure
(by email)

3 March 2020

Dear Michael

NORTHERN IRELAND ROAD SAFETY STRATEGY 2020 STATISTICS

As you are aware, we recently conducted a review of the [Northern Ireland Road Safety Strategy 2020](#) statistics produced by Department for Infrastructure against the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#). The statistics have been considered as part of a wider review of the devolved nations road safety statistics, following our [compliance check of Road Accidents and Safety statistics for Great Britain](#) produced by the Department for Transport. The statistics were reviewed against the three pillars of the Code – trustworthiness, quality and value – crucial aspects in ensuring the statistics inform users about the performance of road safety programmes throughout Northern Ireland.

I am pleased to inform you that these statistics should continue to be designated as National Statistics. We found several positive examples in the way that these statistics are produced and presented by Department for Infrastructure:

- The team has used suitable data sources to produce the statistics and has established good working relationships with the relevant team at Police Service Northern Ireland, the main data providers, as well as teams within the Department for Infrastructure who provide supplementary data.
- The accompanying [user guide](#) presents a thorough assessment of the strengths and limitations of the road safety indicators. The use of multiple data sources to produce the statistics requires the quality and uncertainty of the data to be well considered and explained – something that the team has successfully achieved.
- The team has published [extensive material](#) regarding the outcome of its user consultation in 2016 and is open in highlighting areas where user needs have yet to be fully met. For example, the team acknowledges that there is demand among users for information regarding mobile phone usage as a cause of road traffic collisions but explains the challenge of providing these statistics under the current reporting system.
- The team makes good use of charts and infographics throughout the statistical bulletins to improve the clarity and ease of data interpretation. Figures displaying data trends against the baseline and the 2020 target provide users with a good understanding of how progress is being made towards meeting each target.

We have identified several areas where we consider that the team could make improvements to further enhance the public value of the statistics:

- The team should look to expand its existing user engagement activities to better understand the broader users of the statistics. Identifying currently unknown users will enable the team

to gain a clearer understanding of how the statistics are and could be used, in addition to policymaking within the Department.

- We recommend that the team establish a stronger working partnership with other producer teams in the devolved administrations who use the [STATS19](#) collection series, to ensure that the issues that are common to all devolved administrations are acted upon. We also recommend that the team inform users of the current review, since this is the main data source for the statistics. This will be most important should there be any changes to the data collection process following the outcome of the STATS19 review.
- We welcome the team's intention to review the presentation of the statistics and their current production process. This includes exploring the use of programming languages and version control software to minimise manual intervention and therefore reduce the risk of errors. The team could look to similar examples shared by the [Reproducible Analytical Pipeline community](#) within the Government Statistical Service.
- We also encourage the team to work with the wider Department to review the format of its website and tools available to statistics producers with the aim of resolving issues that currently prevent the development of interactive publications.

Our Travel, Transport and Tourism team will continue to engage with you and your team in the coming months to follow up on areas that have been highlighted for improvement. We would like to thank the team for their engagement and cooperation throughout the review process.

I am copying this letter to Tracy Power, Director of Analysis NISRA, Ruth Fulton, Head of NISRA Statistical Support and Business Planning and Norma Broomfield, NISRA Statistical Support Branch.

Yours sincerely



Mark Pont

Assessment Programme Lead