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**Ed Humpherson, Director General for Regulation**

Daniel Shaw  
Chief Statistician  
Home Office  
(By email)

15 July 2021

Dear Daniel

**National Statistics designation for Police Funding for England and Wales statistics**

We have reviewed the actions that your team has taken to address the requirements in [Assessment Report: Police Funding for England and Wales Statistics](#). I would like to commend you and your team's engagement with us during the assessment, demonstrating your commitment to [developing](#) and improving the statistics for the public good.

On behalf of the Board of the UK Statistics Authority, I am pleased to confirm the designation of National Statistics for the Police Funding for England and Wales statistics, produced by Home Office. These statistics provide a valuable source of information on an issue that has been at the centre of public debate on policing for a number of years.

During the assessment you and your team showed commitment and enthusiasm to the improvement of these statistics with actions proactively undertaken to improve the statistics during the assessment process. We were particularly impressed by the positive responses we received from users. We anticipate that your recent and ongoing steps to improve the publication and the statistics will greatly add to the value they provide to these users. More detail about our judgement is included in the annex to this letter.

National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and value and is something to be celebrated.

We also welcome your ongoing work to improve the statistics and look forward to seeing these developments, such as increased user engagement which should enhance the relevance of these statistics for a wide range of users.

Yours sincerely



Ed Humpherson  
Director General for Regulation

**Review of actions taken in response to Assessment Report: Police Funding for England and Wales statistics, produced by Home Office**

	Requirement	Actions taken by Home Office to meet the Requirement	OSR's evaluation of the evidence
Value	<p>1. To enhance the timeliness of the statistics, Home Office should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Publish preliminary figures at the start of the financial year.</li> <li>b) Be clear what the constraints are to the timeliness of the statistics.</li> </ul>	<p>The team has investigated the feasibility of publishing preliminary figures at the start of the financial year and concluded that it is not possible to bring publication forward due to the constraints of the data sources.</p> <p>While the Police Funding Settlement is published in February each year, the finalised precept figures are generally not available until April at the earliest. The precept figures go through a quality assurance and adjustment process before they are published, and these adjustments outside of the settlement period need to be verified with policy teams in May/June. While there may be scope to bring publication forward by up to two weeks, the publication of GDP deflators at the end of June means it is preferable to wait to enable the most up-to-date forecasts to be used.</p> <p>The team has focused on explaining the necessary steps in the production of the statistics and how these impact timeliness, and improving signposting of the Police Funding Settlement data. The team added a description to a newly created <a href="#">User Guide</a></p>	<p>We are satisfied that, currently, the statistics are published as quickly as they can be, and it is not feasible to produce a preliminary estimate.</p> <p>The description of the production process will help users understand the constraints to the timeliness of the statistics.</p> <p>We are encouraged that the team has committed to keeping the timeliness of the statistics under review on a regular basis. It should speak to users as part of this work.</p>

		<p>which accompanies the statistics published in July 2021.</p> <p>The User Guide states the Home Office's commitment to continuously reviewing the timing of the publication. This is particularly relevant given the potential impact of re-designing the funding settlement spreadsheet (see below).</p>	
	<p>2. Home Office should publish real-terms as well as nominal prices to provide greater understanding of the effects of inflation on police funding.</p>	<p>Following a review of funding statistics produced by other departments such as HMT and MHCLG, the team will publish the figures in both nominal and real terms. For the 2021 publication, the team used GDP deflators published by HMT on 30 June 2021 to convert the nominal figures into real terms figures.</p> <p>The User Guide will explain the necessary caution around these comparisons. For example, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there is greater volatility in the GDP deflators.</p>	<p>Publishing both figures enhances the insight and usability of the statistics – it means users no longer need to calculate the real terms figures themselves. The explanation in the User Guide will support interpretation of the statistics.</p>
	<p>3. To bring these statistics into line with other similar statistics, Home Office should provide a high-level total funding figure for England and Wales going back to 2010</p>	<p>Having reviewed the data, the team intends to publish the total funding figure back to 2010/11 in the accompanying data tables. This time series will include a series break in 2015/16, highlighting comparability issues before this point. No further breakdowns of this data will be published due to significant changes to the structure of police funding, as explained in the User Guide.</p>	<p>Extending the time series back to 2010/11 meets a user need and enhances the value of the statistics by enabling users to better understand the impact of the 2015 spending review on police funding.</p>

	<p>4. Home Office should provide a breakdown of funding for Wales and England.</p>	<p>Central Government and local council tax precept funding is currently published at police force level. The team will also publish aggregate figures at NUTS1 level (the nine statistical regions of England and Wales), allowing for easier regional analysis.</p> <p>The team told us that additional funding provided for national policing initiatives are not allocated to individual police forces so cannot be included in any regional analysis. A section in the User Guide will explain why this is not possible.</p>	<p>Publishing regional breakdowns meets a user need for more-granular information about police funding. The regional figures will be particularly helpful for users in Wales.</p>
	<p>5. To allow easier further analysis, Home Office should provide the data tables in Excel or ODS format.</p>	<p>All data tables are now published in an Excel format alongside the release, in line with other Home Office statistical publications.</p>	<p>Publishing the data tables in Excel format adds value by enhancing reuse of the data.</p>
	<p>6. To build its understanding of users and ensure the statistics meet user needs, Home Office should develop and implement a strategy for engaging with users. As part of this Home Office should consider preparing an action plan of how the statistics team intends to grow its user base.</p>	<p>Having consulted the available guidance on user engagement, the team has committed to develop a user engagement strategy and action plan over the next three months. This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Plans for engaging with currently identified users of the statistics.</b> As part of our assessment, we identified key users of the statistics, several of whom were happy for their contact details to be shared with the Home Office. The team intends to take a proactive approach in contacting these users, including meeting with them to better understand how they use the statistics.</li> </ul>	<p>We are encouraged by the team's commitment to expanding its user base and engaging with users. The strategy signals a more proactive approach to user engagement and should provide a good platform for continuing to enhance the relevance of the statistics for a wide range of users. We look forward to seeing the outcomes of this work. To further demonstrate transparency around user engagement, and facilitate further engagement</p>

- **Plans for identifying other users.** The team will also aim to use the users identified in our assessment to target existing networks who may already be using the statistics.
- **Plans for promoting the statistics / identifying potential new users.** The team will explore how it can use existing networks and organisations to open a dialogue with potential users. For example, it may consider running a workshop with the House of Commons Library to better understand how parliamentary researchers currently engage with the statistics and how this can be developed further.
- **Plans for receiving and addressing feedback.** The team added information to the User Guide on how users can get in touch and provide feedback. The GOV.UK landing page text will also encourage users to provide feedback following changes made this year. The team will look at how it can collect feedback on a more continuous basis and how it responds to ensure appropriate action is taken when user feedback is received. The User Guide contains a section on user engagement which summarises some of the user feedback identified by us during our assessment and how the team aims to address this. It intends to continue to use

from users, it would be good for the team to publish the strategy and action plan.

		the User Guide to share plans to develop the statistics.	
<b>Quality</b>	7. To ensure the continued quality of the data, Home Office should implement Reproduceable Analytical Pipelines (RAP) in the production of the statistics.	<p>The funding statistics team and workforce statistics team are working collaboratively to create a more streamlined, reproducible spreadsheet that incorporates principles from the Aqua Book. The spreadsheet which is currently used to record funding data for the police funding settlement is large and complex and introduces a risk of calculation errors. Planning work on the new spreadsheet began in June 2021, with the aim of completing and fully testing it by the end of August, ahead of the next funding settlement process.</p> <p>The police statistics team has a good working knowledge of RAP: it successfully implemented RAP to a range of statistical releases, including the <a href="#">police officer uplift statistics</a> and the <a href="#">annual police workforce statistics</a>. It will use this knowledge to consider any areas where RAP principles may be applied to the police funding publication. As the spreadsheet is used by non-analytical users, this may limit the complexity of any processes.</p>	<p>We welcome the team's collaborative approach to developing a more streamlined spreadsheet. The new spreadsheet will build the team's understanding of data processing and improve quality by minimising the risk of errors.</p> <p>We are confident that the team has the necessary skills and capability to implement RAP. However, we appreciate that the nature of the police funding data poses certain challenges that may not make full RAP possible.</p>
	8. a) To increase understanding and clarity around the quality of the data, Home Office should publish a quality document alongside the statistics.	The team has created a dedicated User Guide for the statistics. It contains the basic quality information currently included in the statistical publication as well as additional information on limitations of the data,	The dedicated User Guide will make a difference to user understanding of the quality of the statistics and support appropriate use of the statistics. It has the added

b) To better understand the limitations of the data, Home Office should apply our Quality Assurance of Administrative Data (QAAD) framework.

particularly in terms of the scope of what is included.

The team has reviewed the statistics against our QAAD framework. It judged the publication to be of medium public profile. While police funding attracts a lot of external interest, the figures in this release are not new, and have already been published in the Written Ministerial Statement and Police Grant report.

The team considers the police funding statistics to carry a low risk of quality concern as the information can be easily validated against published material; the data are held within the Home Office (rather than held externally) and are well understood; and the close involvement of the police funding policy team in the production of the statistics limits the risk of quality concerns. It has therefore determined [A1]/[A2] as the minimum level of assurance required for these statistics.

The User Guide provides examples of practices that meet the appropriate level of assurance, including:

- Explaining the operational context of the collection of the data to users
- Providing an explanation of classifications in a glossary
- Explaining the impact of changes to the structure of police funding (and therefore

benefit of shortening the publication, which will make it easier to navigate.

It is good that team found our QAAD framework helpful and that the User Guide contains a summary of the findings of the QAAD review.

		<p>police funding data) on the scope of the statistics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Details of the quality assurance undertaken by the police funding policy team ahead of the provision of the dataset</li> <li>• Details of the quality assurance undertaken by the police statistics team upon receipt of the data</li> <li>• The limitations of the statistics including potential rounding error and issues affecting year-on-year comparability.</li> </ul> <p>The User Guide signposts users to the technical notes for MHCLG's and Welsh Governments council tax statistics, which are used in the production of these statistics, and highlights the close working relationship between Home Office and these organisations.</p>	
<b>Trustworthiness</b>	<p>9. To ensure transparency, clarity and insight, Home Office should provide a clear explanation of the funding allocation and approval process.</p>	<p>Information on the police funding settlement process is presented in several different documents, including the Written Ministerial Statement, Police Grant Report and Police Funding for England and Wales statistics. The team added a description to the User Guide which sets out key milestones in the production of the statistics and the wider funding settlement process. It has also identified further published material which the User Guide will signpost users to.</p>	<p>The additional information about the funding settlement process enhances transparency and will help users understand the key events that take place before the statistics are produced.</p>