
Ed Humpherson, Director General for Regulation

Grant Fitzner
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Office for National Statistics

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Dear Grant

National Statistics designation for Country and Regional Public Finance statistics

We have reviewed the actions that your team has taken to address the requirements in [Assessment report 367: Country and regional public sector finances](#). I would like to thank you and your team for your swift actions to improve these statistics following the publication of our assessment report on the 6 May.

On behalf of the Board of the UK Statistics Authority, I am pleased to confirm the designation of National Statistics for country and regional public sector finance statistics. The statistics are a valuable and trusted source of data for providing users with a single view of public sector finances for the UK's nations and English regions.

Widening the participation of the sub-UK public sector finances working group and seeking feedback from users on the presentation and accessibility of the statistics will help to improve their profile. The advice about statistical uncertainty will also help to ensure appropriate use of the statistics.

I am copying this letter to Phillip Wales, Head of Public Sector Division at ONS and Rob Pennington, Head of Public Sector Projects and Analysis at ONS.

Yours sincerely,



Ed Humpherson
Director General for Regulation

Annex A Review of actions taken in response to Assessment Report 367: Assessment of Country and Regional Public Sector Finances, produced by the Office for National Statistics (ONS)

Requirement	Actions taken by ONS to meet the requirement	OSR's evaluation of evidence
<p>Requirement 1 ONS must plan to ensure that the profile and accessibility of CRPSF statistics reflects any increased demand for them.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ONS is reviewing the membership of its sub-UK public sector finance working group, to reflect potential wider interest in these statistics. ONS is considering including representatives from local authorities and from local interest groups, including those nominated by the devolved administrations. • ONS plans to follow up enquiries from users to gather feedback on the accessibility and presentation of CRPSF statistics. ONS will also look to include links to CRPSF statistics in the wider UK Public Sector Finance (PSF) statistical release and to draw PSF users' attention to CRPSF statistics via tweets. 	<p>In response to increasing interest in CRPSF statistics amongst local economic development bodies, we recognise the efforts ONS is making to develop the statistics' accessibility and profile. These efforts are in line with ONS's plans to produce disaggregated estimates of regional public sector finances.</p>
<p>Requirement 2 ONS must explain to users the statistical uncertainties around CRPSF statistics arising from the choices of data sources and methods, being especially clear on how these uncertainties affect interpretation of statistical estimates that are similar.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ONS has shared with us proposed text for inclusion in its statistical bulletin and Quality and Methodology Information documentation, in which ONS has provided users with clear guidance on the presence of statistical uncertainty in CRPSF statistics and how users should interpret this uncertainty. • In its advice to users, ONS draws attention to the statistical uncertainty arising from the use of survey data to apportion, for example, taxation data across UK regions and nations. ONS also advises users to consider this uncertainty when comparing estimates that are similar to each other, or when interpreting the performance of any country or region between time periods. 	<p>We commend ONS's efforts to improve the public value of CRPSF statistics by clearly explaining to users the impact of statistical uncertainty on the use of CRPSF statistics. This advice is of particular importance to users making comparisons across regions and nations, where estimates across these geographies are similar.</p>