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**Mark Pont, Assessment Programme Lead**

Siobhan Carey

Chief Executive and Registrar General, Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency  
(by email)

26 May 2022

Dear Siobhan

**Suicide Statistics in Northern Ireland**

As part of our [review of mental health statistics in Northern Ireland](#), users raised concerns about a classification issue in the source data which affected the [ICD-10](#) coding and reporting of suicides in Northern Ireland. Following these concerns, we have reviewed the extent to which the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) has addressed these issues in a way that has trustworthiness, quality and public value at its heart.

Our review identified several positives with the way that the statistics team at NISRA has approached the work. First, NISRA has clearly demonstrated its commitment to producing high quality statistics that provide value to the public. NISRA demonstrated trustworthiness by being transparent about the issue it had uncovered and the work that was going on to resolve the issue by releasing a [guidance note to users](#). NISRA has been clear to users about any potential risks in the quality and accuracy of its deaths data as well as explaining how they plan on minimising these risks. NISRA has done this by reviewing its quality assurance arrangements against our [Quality Assurance of Administrative Data \(QAAD\) framework](#), by introducing new quality checks as part of its quality assurance processes, and improving its process documentation. We also commend NISRA for its approach to addressing the communication around this revision in a sensitive and open manner.

We welcome your plans for further work beyond the publication of the revised statistics today. It is good that you have committed to broaden your user engagement within the research community, and to continue to build relationships with the Coroner's Office and others to help maximise the quality of these statistics.

I would like to thank your team for their positive engagement on this review. I am copying this letter to Patrick Butler, Head of Coroners Service and Legacy Inquest Unit, Coroner's Office in Northern Ireland and Deborah Lyness, Head of Vital Statistics and Administrative Research and Support Branch, NISRA.

Yours sincerely



Mark Pont  
Assessment Programme Lead