
Director General for Regulation

Neil McIvor
Chief Data Officer and Chief Statistician
Department for Education
(by email)

13 July 2022

Dear Neil

Assessment of Key Stage 4 Performance Statistics

We have completed our [assessment](#) of the Key Stage 4 (KS4) performance statistics produced by the Department for Education (DfE). I am grateful for the positive engagement from you and colleagues across DfE throughout the assessment process.

The KS4 performance statistics are a high-profile output and are used for a number of different purposes by a wide range of users and our assessment found widespread good practice in the production of the KS4 statistics. DfE regularly engages with a wide range of users and uses their feedback to inform improvements to the statistics. Users spoke highly of the impartial and informative commentary that accompanies the KS4 statistical release, as well as the quality of the statistics. The KS4 statistics set a strong example of how data can be linked and shared in order to inform education policy and research.

We have identified four areas that could strengthen the statistics further, to ensure that they fulfil the highest standards of the Code of Practice for Statistics. We have identified four actions for DfE to fulfil in order for the statistics to continue to be designated as National Statistics. The recommendations focus on ensuring that:

- users have the information they need to draw reliable conclusions from the statistics, including on the distinction between the accountability measures and wider KS4 performance statistics
- users also have the information they need to understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic
- a broad range of users are involved in the development of the statistics and that more information is shared publicly about KS4 development plans
- public confidence in DfE data governance procedures is maintained by continuing with existing plans to publish an update on progress with meeting the recommendations of the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) audit that relate to the Code of Practice for Statistics

We have agreed with the KS4 team that it will introduce improvements to the statistical bulletin on the impact on COVID-19 for the 2021/22 release (requirement 2) and on the

distinction of the accountability measures for the 2022/23 release (requirement 1). The team will also increase the breadth of its stakeholder engagement and share more information publicly on the KS4 development plans (requirement 3) as well as publishing an update on the ICO audit before the 2022/23 release (requirement 4).

Please feel free to discuss any aspect of this with me or my team at any time.

I am copying this letter to David Simpson, Head of Profession for Statistics, DfE.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ed Humpherson', written in a cursive style.

Ed Humpherson
Director General for Regulation