
Ed Humpherson, Director General for Regulation

Liz McKeown
Director of Public Policy Analysis
Office for National statistics (ONS)
(by email)

5 May 2023

Dear Liz

Updated Sustainable Development Goals article

I am writing to welcome your decision to update your article on [Sex and gender within the context of data collected for the Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#).

The background is that [I wrote to you](#) last year about an article on your website that aimed to set out the interpretation of the terms sex and gender in the context of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

In that letter, I advised that an article titled 'What is the difference between sex and gender?' had the potential to cause confusion and to be used outside of the context of the Sustainable Development Goals.

In [your response to my letter](#), you informed me that ONS had added an information banner to the article to provide clarity for users on when the article was published and on its original purpose in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals.

Following further discussions with my team, you have reached the welcome decision to update the article and rename it to [Sex and gender within the context of data collected for the Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#). You have also removed the previous article to avoid it being misinterpreted and used out of context.

The article is clear that its purpose is to provide information on the complexities in reporting sex and gender data for the Sustainable Development Goals and will help users of the Sustainable Development Goals better understand why both the terms sex and gender are used. The article also signposts readers to information about the work of the Government Statistical Service Harmonisation team on sex and gender. This is helpful for those with an interest in this topic beyond the use of the terms in the Sustainable Development Goals.

Thank you for the time you have taken to speak to my team on this topic.

Yours sincerely



Ed Humpherson
Director General for Regulation