
Ed Humpherson, Director General for Regulation

Scott Heald, Director of Data and Digital Innovation
Public Health Scotland
(by email)

27 July 2023

Dear Scott

Assessment of Accident and Emergency (A&E) Activity Statistics in Scotland

We have completed our assessment of the [weekly A&E activity statistics](#) produced by Public Health Scotland (PHS). We judge that these statistics can be designated as National Statistics once we have confirmed that the requirements set out in our report have been met. We have also carried out a compliance check of the monthly waiting times statistics and I am pleased to confirm that these statistics should continue to be designated as National Statistics. The weekly and monthly statistics are now available together on a new platform reporting statistics on A&E departments across Scotland. This platform is a positive and innovative development and welcomed by many users in terms of improved accessibility and functionality.

Waiting times continue to be of high public interest across the UK and I am grateful for the positive engagement from you and colleagues in the A&E statistics team throughout the assessment process. It was particularly encouraging how the team adopted a proactive approach and implemented many of our emerging recommendations during the development of the new platform. Of key importance is your ongoing work to ensure that users are aware of the differences in hospital site inclusions between the weekly and monthly statistics to support appropriate use of the statistics – for example, only the monthly statistics include all units and departments relevant to the Scottish Government target that 95% of people attending A&E should be seen, admitted, discharged or transferred within four hours of arrival. You publish some of the disaggregated datasets only monthly. This should be kept under review in case there is further user demand for that level of granularity on a more frequent basis.

We identified three requirements that would strengthen both sets of statistics: extending user engagement to a wider range of users, assisting users to make appropriate cross-UK comparisons, and consider ways to communicate uncertainty to further aid user interpretation of the statistics. Implementing these requirements will ensure that the statistics continue to meet the highest standards of the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#). As discussed, we expect you to report back to us by September 2023 on how you have met these requirements.

I am copying this letter to Emma McNair, Information Consultant at Public Health Scotland.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ed Humpherson'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial 'E' and a long, sweeping underline.

Ed Humpherson
Director General for Regulation