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**Ed Humpherson, Director General for Regulation**

Dr Philip Wales  
Chief Executive and Registrar General  
Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency  
(by email)

29 February 2024

Dear Phil

**Regulatory guidance on collecting and reporting data about sex and gender identity in official statistics**

Today we published [new guidance](#) on collecting and reporting data about sex and gender identity in official statistics. This guidance updates and supersedes the OSR previous draft guidance on collecting and reporting data about sex in official statistics, published in 2021.

This guidance is intended to support official statistics producers in applying the principles of the Code of Practice for Statistics when making decisions about the collection and reporting of statistics and data about sex and gender identity. All official statistics producers have a responsibility to ensure that their statistics continue to be useful, easy to access, remain relevant, and that they support understanding of important issues.

The key message of this guidance is that official statistics producers should have a strong understanding of their own data collections and of how these meet the needs of their users, they are clear about what information they are collecting and why, and that they explain this information as straightforwardly as possible both to respondents and data users.

As Chief Statistician, you play a key role in leading work in this area within Northern Ireland. In this role, you have the responsibility for advising statistical and analytical teams on statistical practices, for making decisions on approaches, and for ensuring coherence across statistical outputs.

I ask that you use and promote the OSR guidance to all official statistics producers in Northern Ireland. It is our view that applying this guidance should not be seen as a one-off activity, rather it should be continuously applied to support ongoing development and improvement activities.

Today, I have also written to the Chief Statisticians of [Scotland](#) and [Wales](#), setting out our expectations for them. Additionally I have written to [Emma Rourke](#), Deputy National Statistician to set out a number of recommendations for the Government Statistical Service (GSS), these are based on feedback from producers of the need for more practical support and harmonised standards.

We recognise that this is an evolving area and we will keep this guidance under review and update when appropriate. We welcome feedback on this guidance from statistics producers and others at any time – please email us at [regulation@statistics.gov.uk](mailto:regulation@statistics.gov.uk).

Yours sincerely

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

Ed Humpherson  
Director General for Regulation