Director General for Regulation

Head of Statistics Branch
Police Service of Northern Ireland

10 March 2020

Dear Senior Statistician,

CONFIRMATION OF NATIONAL STATISTICS DESIGNATION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND MOTORING OFFENCE STATISTICS

We have reviewed the actions that your team has taken to address the requirements in Assessment Report number 347: Motoring Offence Statistics.

On behalf of the Board of the UK Statistics Authority, I am pleased to confirm the designation of National Statistics for the Motoring Offence Statistics, produced by Police Service of Northern Ireland. The statistics provide relevant, trusted information about motoring offences in Northern Ireland, with a good overview of the main trends. They enable users to better understand road safety in Northern Ireland and to develop policies that aim to improve it.

During the course of the assessment the team responsible for producing the statistics showed great commitment to the improvement of these statistics. We are really pleased by the enthusiastic and thorough approach the team has taken to meeting the requirements from the Assessment Report. We anticipate that the addition of new data and improvements to the presentation of the published statistics will add value for users and give them greater insight into the geographic distribution of motoring offences and into trends.

We have included more detail about our judgment in an annex to this letter. I, or my team, would be happy to talk you or your colleagues through any aspects of this letter or Code compliance more generally.

National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and value and is something to be celebrated. We invite you to include a statement alongside the statistics which reflects the National Statistics status.

I am copying this letter to Siobhan Carey Chief Statiscian NISRA; Ruth Fulton Head of NISRA Statistcial Branch, Chief Constable PSNI and Stephen Donnely NISRA.

Your sincerely

Ed Humpherson
Director General for Regulation

Review of actions taken in response to Assessment Report 347: Assessment of Motoring Offence Statistics, produced by Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI)

Requirement	Actions taken by PSNI to meet the Requirement	OSR's evaluation of evidence
1. At the time of assessment, the PSNI statistics team received many requests for additional analysis from individual users of the Motoring Offence Statistics (MOS). We asked the team to review these additional analysis requests, with a view to developing published statistics to pre-emptively meet these needs.	The team reviewed all information requests received in 2019. Several key topic areas were identified and additions to the published statistics have been made, or are planned, to proactively meet user needs: • Top speed detected over the period was added to the monthly report from November 2019 • A thematic map showing offences by District was added to the monthly report from December 2019 • Additional detail on top speeds, drink/drug driving offences and offence specific maps will be included in the annual report in March 2020 • The team has collaborated with the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Service's (NISRA) Neighbourhood Information Service to provide an interactive map on its website, which allows users to explore Fixed Penalty Notices issued and speed awareness courses completed by District. Some information requests related to detections on specific roads. The team assessed the quality of its street level data, to see if it could add these data to the current open data, which is provided to users through OpenDataNI. Although the team concluded that the data quality is not high enough to avoid misinterpretation or under-reporting by users at present, it has initiated plans to improve quality and will review its decision on an ongoing basis. The team has also considered the latest user satisfaction survey responses to inform what users want from the published statistics. Suggestions around additional data were for individual offences, as opposed to offence group. As a result, the team added a new 'specific offence' variable to its open data in January 2020. The team continues to liaise closely with known users of the statistics about data requirements, through face-to-face meetings,	We are really pleased by the enthusiastic and thorough approach taken by the team to investigate and meet this requirement. It was great to see changes being implemented in the statistics from as early as November. By reviewing additional analysis requests and making informed improvements to the published statistics, which we anticipate will reduce the number of additional information requests the team receives, the team has increased the value of the statistics in a resource-efficient way. We consider that this should be a periodic exercise and we are that pleased PSNI has agreed that it is valuable and that the statistics team will continue to review the additional request it gets, with a view to further improving and adding value to published statistics.

		presentations, surveys, emails and telephone contact.	
2.	The team was not engaging in proactive activity to identify new users/potential users of the statistics. We asked the team to set out how it will proactively identify currently unknown and or potential users of the statistics.	The team has drawn on existing users to help identify new users. The team has been introduced to, and presented to, the Roads Policing Inspectors Group, which has led to greater awareness of its work and possible new avenues for analysis, which it is exploring with this group. The team has been asked to join meetings on a regular basis to report on recent statistics and trends. The team has proactively contacted Roadsafe NI, a voluntary organisation in the road safety sector. After presenting to the Board, the team has been invited to present at a Road Safety conference in March, where there will be around 100 members of Roadsafe NI. The team intends to analyse social media engagements related to the MOS on Twitter to identify potential regular users, prior to the annual report in March 2020. Through its new development workplan (see requirement 4), the team is highlighting collaborative projects, which could help attract new users to the statistics. These projects include work with the Department for Infrastructure and with Forensic Science Northern Ireland.	Since the assessment the team has already built strong relationships with two new user groups, which has widened the impact and enhanced the value of the statistics. We anticipate that publishing information about collaborative work with external partners in the work plan for the MOS will improve transparency about the range of uses for the MOS and about the work the team does, which could encourage other potential users of the statistics to get in touch. We support the team's plan to use social media to continue to identify new users of the statistics.
3.	The published statistics did not include discussion of, or links to, other statistics produced by PSNI or additional organisations that could enhance user understanding of trends in motoring offences. We asked the team to discuss or link to relevant statistics in its statistical bulletins.	The team has explored statistics within its own branch, within wider PSNI and produced by external organisations to identify data that may be relevant to the MOS. As a result, published bulletins from January 2020 will incorporate links to other Statistics Branch data, including Road Traffic Collisions. The team has obtained data from within wider PSNI (numbers of roads policing officers and data from targeted campaigns such as drink driving) and from the Department for Infrastructure (number of licensed vehicles and driving licence holders), which it is analysing with the MOS. The team will include these statistics and the outcomes of its analysis in published statistics if it judges they provide insight into the MOS.	Again, we have been impressed by the enthusiasm with which the team is investigating and incorporating data from multiple sources into the motoring offence statistics. This is improving the narrative around the motoring offence statistics and offering greater insight to users about trends.

4.	At the time of assessment, PSNI had not published a work plan for the MOS. We asked that the team publish a work plan covering short, medium- and longer-term developments to the statistics.	A development plan was published in January 2020. The PSNI team intends that this will be a live document and amended as required.	The published work plan improves transparency about upcoming changes to the statistics for users. It gives the team the opportunity to shape developments and allows them to monitor progress against the plan.
5.	While not a requirement, we recommended that the team considered how it can be more innovative in its presentation of the statistics	The team has sought feedback on how it presents its monthly and annual reports from the Government Statistical Service (GSS) Good Practice Team: feedback received will be reflected in the annual report in March 2020. The team has explored options to present data using maps and included a map showing the rate of motoring offences per 10,000 by Policing District in the December 2019 monthly report. The March 2020 annual report will contain multiple maps, showing this information for specific offences. As mentioned above, the team has also collaborated with NISRA's Neighbourhood Information Service to provide an interactive map. The team has attended a NISRA 'Insight' event to learn how other NISRA branches are presenting their statistics and has reviewed infographics produced by NISRA colleagues in different departments. The team has requested assistance from the PSNI Print Unit to develop an infographic for the motoring offences publication.	We welcome the team's commitment to improving the presentation of the statistics and its approach – seeking help from the Good Practice Team and learning from what others are doing in this space. Adding maps to illustrate the geographic distribution of offences meets a direct ask we heard from users during our assessment. Making these changes will ensure best practice is applied in relation to data presentation, adding value to the statistics by helping users to extract insight.