
Director General, Monitoring and Assessment

Stephen Penneck
Office for National Statistics
Government Buildings
Cardiff Road
Newport
NP10 8XG

16 December 2011

Dear Stephen

ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL STATISTICS

Thank you for the various emails outlining the actions that have been taken to address the requirements in the following Assessment reports (AR):

- AR 34: Labour Market Statistics*
- AR 45: Balance of Payments Statistics*
- AR 47: Overseas Travel and Tourism Statistics*
- AR 65: Statistics on Pensions*
- AR 68: Adoptions in England and Wales*
- AR 80: Statistics on Retail Sales*
- AR 87: Short-term Migration for England and Wales*
- AR 94: Effects of taxes and benefits*
- AR 104: Statistics on Civil Partnerships*
- AR 109: Statistics on Cancer in England

* relate to Assessments where we have been awaiting confirmation that the new ONS website can deliver statistical releases at 9:30 am; all other Requirements were met earlier.

The Board of the Statistics Authority has reviewed these on the advice of the Assessment team and we are pleased to confirm the designation of the outputs as National Statistics.

The assessment of Retail Sales highlights a general issue of the presentation, and subsequent media reporting, of volatile short term economic indicators. There may be a case for reviewing the strategy for the publication of all ONS short term economic indicators to see whether the current mix of monthly and quarterly statistics is meeting users' needs as well as it might. It may also be appropriate for ONS to be more outspoken when such statistics are not reported as appropriately as we would like. We would be very happy to discuss this further with you.

It is a requirement of the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 that the Code of Practice must continue to be complied with in relation to the statistics. We would invite you to incorporate the attached text in publications containing the statistics. This text may only be used where National Statistics designation has been awarded following an Assessment Report. It is intended to convey a strong and independent endorsement for the statistical publication.

Please feel free to discuss any aspect of this with us at any time. I am copying this letter to Jill Matheson, the National Statistician.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Alldritt'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'R' and a long, sweeping underline.

Richard Alldritt

Text that may only be used in publications that carry the National Statistics logo following assessment and designation:

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods, and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.