
Chair of the UK Statistics Authority, Sir David Norgrove

Hugh Widdis
Permanent Secretary
Department of Finance
Clare House, 303 Airport Road
Belfast
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5 July 2017

Dear Minister

Consultation on a refreshed Code of Practice for Statistics

I write to advise you that the Board of the UK Statistics Authority is today launching a consultation on a refreshed edition of the *Code of Practice for Statistics*. A copy of the draft Code and accompanying consultation document are attached.

Statistics are an essential public asset which are fundamental to the judgements and decisions made by the public, by government and by an enormous range of other organisations. The *Code of Practice for Statistics* is an important tool in protecting official statistics by setting the standards which must be met to ensure the public can have confidence in them.

The *Code of Practice for Official Statistics Edition 1.0* was first published in January 2009. Since then it has been the basis of government's provision of statistics and the bedrock for the UK Statistics Authority's regulatory judgements – most notably the Authority's statutory Assessment function carried out by the Office for Statistics Regulation, and our public statements on the use of statistics in the public domain.

Today's consultation reflects the views expressed by stakeholders, during an initial stocktake of the *Code of Practice* in late 2015. The conclusion of this stocktake, published in December 2016, was that the landscape of information production and dissemination has changed significantly since 2009, and the Code needs to adapt in the face of these developments.¹

The refreshed version of the *Code of Practice for Statistics* seeks to establish a flexible framework structured into three pillars of Trustworthiness, Quality and Value, and is underpinned by a set of detailed principles and practices. This framework can be applied in a proportionate and flexible way by all producers of statistics and numerical information. In this way, the Code sets out more clearly how it supports public confidence in statistics.

Our consultation will run for 13 weeks ending on 5 October 2017 and we invite responses from all those with an interest in statistics to ensure that they serve the public good. We would welcome your input.

¹ Available at: <https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/publication/stocktake-of-the-code-of-practice-for-official-statistics-exposure-draft/>

We will summarise the main findings in a report in the autumn of 2017. The Board of the Authority will consider that report and make any further decisions on launching the refreshed Code around the end of 2017.

I am copying this letter to the Authority's Director-General for Regulation, Ed Humpherson, and the Chief Executive of the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, Siobhan Carey.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Norgrove". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Sir David Norgrove