
Ed Humpherson, Director General for Regulation

William Wragg MP
Chair, Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee
House of Commons
London
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26 July 2022

Dear Mr Wragg

I would like to highlight our key findings from our State of Statistical System report¹ that the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) published on 18th July. This is the third year we have published this report, which draws together findings from our regulatory work over the 2021/22 year.

In a year that saw the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, a war in Ukraine, climate change impacts and cost of living crisis, we have seen a positive shift in how statistics and data have been used to help support decision makers and better understand the landscape.

The report shows that the statistical system has continued to deliver more timely and real time data, while expanding its use of data tools for both expert and non-expert users.

We have seen encouraging signs in the way statistics have been collected and produced with new data sources, collection methods and greater use of Reproducible Analytical Pipelines². While OSR commends the progress being made, more effort is still needed to ensure uncertainty is effectively communicated.

One of the improvements has been in collaboration between statistical producers and wider stakeholders in areas beyond data linkage. But there continue to be barriers to data linkage.

The statistical system has also demonstrated that it has a greater understanding of the need for intelligent transparency³ around statistics and data, and that this message is reaching beyond statistical teams. However, a lack of transparency continues to be an issue. This includes failing to make data available to support public statements being made by Government, and not publishing forward plans for statistical development, which helps users understand upcoming change.

¹ <https://osr.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/State-of-Statistical-System-report-2021.22.pdf>

² <https://osr.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/publication/reproducible-analytical-pipelines-overcoming-barriers-to-adoption/>

³ <https://osr.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/transparency/>

Finally, we have seen an increase in government statisticians standing up for the public good, challenging the inappropriate use of statistics more readily and engaging directly with users.

Given the developments highlighted in the report, I am keen to further our progress over the coming year by focusing on intelligent transparency, data linkage, collaboration, and analytical leadership. If you would like to discuss any of these or future topics covered in greater detail, I would be happy to meet.

Yours sincerely

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

Ed Humpherson
Director General for Regulation