
Ed Humpherson, Director General for Regulation

Professor Sir Ian Diamond
National Statistician
Office for National Statistics
(by email)

16 February 2024

Dear Sir Ian,

Assessment: Office for National Statistics' Admin Based Population Estimates for England and Wales

Thank you for [your letter of 13 February](#) requesting an assessment of the Office for National Statistics' Admin Based Population Estimates for England and Wales.

Every country needs to collect population data to understand the size and composition of society – and the way that this is done varies. Population statistics are used extensively to inform decisions about different aspects of life and the communities in which we live. Measuring these in a robust and transparent way is a significant opportunity for statistics to serve the public good.

I welcome your aspiration to publicly demonstrate your compliance with the [Code of Practice of Statistics](#). We support your ambitions to improve methods and make use of technology advances in the production of population estimates. Maintaining public trust and confidence in the changes being made is really important and should be supported by transparent and insightful communication with users.

We will be agile in our approach and conduct a phased assessment to review the new approach in the production of population statistics for England and Wales.

Our first phase will focus on quality covering three broad areas:

1. The suitability and quality assurance of the data and methods used in the Dynamic Population Model to produce population estimates in England and Wales.
2. The extent to which ONS is benchmarking the state of readiness of population estimates to replace the cohort component method previously used.
3. An initial investigation into user understanding of, and confidence in, the proposed new method, and ONS communications on this.

This assessment is taking place in the context of wider transformation of population and migration statistics across the UK. This will require continued collaboration with the Devolved Administrations so that developments are joined-up and coherent in a way that supports wider UK harmonisation.

My team has initiated the assessment and I look forward to engaging with you on the findings in due course.

I am copying this letter to Rachel Skentelbery, Deputy Head of Profession for Statistics at ONS.

Yours sincerely,

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

Ed Humpherson
Director General for Regulation