
Chair of the UK Statistics Authority, Sir David Norgrove

Mr Hugh Pym
Health Editor, BBC News
Via email

23 May 2017

Dear Mr Pym

RELEASE OF NHS IMPROVEMENT DATA

Thank you for your recent email, in which you sought the view of the UK Statistics Authority regarding the publication of financial data from health trusts in England.¹ In your email, you explained that financial data for the three months ending March 2017 – ordinarily published before the end of May – were not expected to be published by NHS Improvement until after the 2017 General Election.

These figures fall outside the statutory remit of the UK Statistics Authority, because they are not official statistics. NHS Improvement is not required to comply with the practices and principles set out in the *Code of Practice for Official Statistics*, including requirements that publication dates be pre-announced, and that data be made equally available to all.

The UK Statistics Authority and NHS Improvement have recently discussed the benefit that would come from NHS Improvement choosing voluntarily to comply with the *Code of Practice* in relation to these data and, in the longer term, to consider publishing them as official statistics so that in future publication dates would indeed be pre-announced, and that complete data would be made equally available to all.

Since you emailed, NHS Providers has published a statement estimating the end-of-year deficit position for NHS trusts, while noting that NHS Improvement's figures will be published after the General Election.² These NHS Providers estimates are also not official statistics.

I am copying this letter to Mr Jim Mackey (Chief Executive, NHS Improvement).

Yours sincerely,



Sir David Norgrove

¹ Correspondence available at: <https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/correspondence/release-of-nhs-improvement-data/>

² Statement available at: <https://www.nhsproviders.org/news-blogs/news/nhs-providers-hails-estimated-70-year-on-year-reduction-in-nhs-provider-sector-financial-deficit>