

9 July 2007

STATISTICS COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT 2006-07

I am delighted to enclose this report, published today.

The past year has seen intense debate about the future organisation of UK official statistics. The Statistics and Registration Service Bill has now almost completed its passage through Parliament and will provide for the establishment of a new Statistics Board and other important changes. In consequence of these developments, the Statistics Commission will be wound up at the end of this financial year.

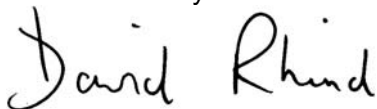
Since 2000, the Commission's remit has been to give independent advice to government and the public; feedback from many people suggests that we have fulfilled that role effectively and in no small measure. The new legislation itself has its roots in our 2004 report *Legislation to Build Trust in Statistics* though there are some important differences. We have welcomed the intent of the Bill and many of its provisions. There are however some aspects that the Statistics Board will need to develop and clarify further once it is established. These are discussed in the annual report.

Underlying all these developments has been a concern – one we share with government and Parliament – to ensure that official statistics are trustworthy and trusted. Public trust matters because statistics which are not trusted will be less used and so will offer less value to set against the cost of their collection. The value of statistics comes through their ability to influence decisions in all sectors of society, from public services to commercial and voluntary organisations. Government must pay close attention to the needs of all the people and organisations whose decision-making might be enhanced if their needs for statistical data were better recognised. That remains our main message.

The Commission still has work to do. In the latter part of 2007 we will publish a series of reports bringing together advice on a wide range of issues; and also a set of proposals for a revised Code of Practice.

In the annual report we pay tribute to the many people who have served the Commission or helped it in its work over the years. Many of those people will be recipients of this letter. I would like to offer you my personal thanks and encourage you to give the new Statistics Board your full support in the challenging job it has to do.

Yours sincerely

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