

National Statistician and Registrar General

**Len Cook**

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Dear Malcolm,

**Quality Review on Measuring Attainment of Young People**

Thank you for the submission of the above National Statistics Quality Review.

I welcome the work carried out by the review team to look at alternative measures of the Department for Education and Skills Public Service Agreement on the Attainment of Young People.

As highlighted in your review the current measure using the Labour Force Survey (LFS) has a number of constraints such as timing, the extent of the proxy answers it provides, and the population coverage. However administrative measures will also have constraints of timing, ambiguity and the completeness of records. Given the importance of the target being monitored, it may be worth considering the varying qualities of the measures available now against the potential quality, and potential cost, of a special purpose measure.

I am grateful for the additional clarification on quality issues that you have provided in response to my questions.

The use of the cohort population aged 14 as the denominator for the administrative measure for the achievement of 19 year olds, while not ideal, is acceptable given the limitations of intercensal population estimation. However, there is a need to assess the impact of migration patterns on these two populations across a five year gap, given the varying propensities of people in their late teens to migrate and the probable significance of inter regional differences.

Whilst developing the measure, it must also be considered whether its prime goal is to measure changing achievement over time at a national level or to have measures to allow comparison across areas and institutions in a single year.

Since any method chosen may continue in use for some years, there may be value in establishing a sample of birth dates that are tracked across all available sources for quality assurance purposes (a similar approach to the Census longitudinal study). Thought could also be given to ongoing validation through monitoring changes in

where the current cohort of 14 - 20 year olds obtain their certificates, with particular attention given to how migrants compare with the rest of the cohort.

I would like to thank the team involved in the production of the report and look forward to the implementation of the recommendations.

Yours sincerely,



**Len Cook**