Chief Statistician
Alastair McAlpine

T: 0131-244 0302
E: chiefstatistician@gov.scot

Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

Sent via e-mail.
Ed Humpherson
DG for Regulation

29th July 2026

RE: Potential disruption to statistical publications in early 2027

Dear Ed,

I am writing to inform you of a risk of potential disruption to a small number of Scottish Government statistical publications during the first quarter of 2027, the factors contributing to this risk, and the action we are taking to minimise any impact.

When I took up the role of Chief Statistician, I challenged our data infrastructure teams to consider how we could modernise the platforms that underpin Scotland's statistical system. The result is a major programme of transformation that will provide more modern, secure and sustainable data infrastructure, improving the way Scottish Government and partner organisations collect, manage, analyse and share data in support of official statistics.

These changes will strengthen our ability to make effective use of the data we collect and move us towards the use of common tools and approaches across the statistical system. In doing so, they will improve the efficiency, transparency, quality and reproducibility of our statistical production processes.

As is common in large-scale transformation programmes, however, we have encountered some implementation challenges and are working closely with statistical teams across government to manage the associated risks.

One of the key risks identified relates to the continuity of statistical outputs. This is particularly relevant for publications that rely on complex analytical processes or legacy systems, and in areas where teams are balancing the infrastructure transition alongside significant demands for analytical support and policy-related work.

At present, there is a risk that for some limited statistical products, including publications in areas such as the economy, crime and justice, and education could be affected. If mitigation measures are not successful, there may be disruption to some quarterly statistical publications scheduled between January and March 2027. We assess that any impacts on publications scheduled between April and June 2027 are likely to be more limited.

αβχδε αβχ α

Our expectation is that many of these issues will be resolved before they affect publication schedules. However, given the scale of the transformation and the complexity, I want to make you aware of the risks at potential impacts at this early stage.

We are continuing to work closely with affected teams to reduce risks, prioritise critical activities and minimise disruption for users both within and outside government. Should any changes to publication schedules become necessary, these will be communicated openly and in line with the Code of Practice for Statistics and our established publication practices.

I hope this provides assurance that we are taking all reasonable steps to minimise disruption while delivering a transformation that will significantly strengthen Scotland's statistical infrastructure and our ability to produce high-quality, high-value statistics in the future.

I would welcome any comments or feedback you may have and appreciate the support that your officials continue to provide to our statistical teams as we deliver this important programme of work.

I am copying this letter to our Permanent Secretary and co-chairs of the ScotStat Board.

Yours sincerely

Alastair McAlpine
Chief Statistician