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Rt Hon Caroline Nokes MP
Chair, Women and Equalities Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

12 August 2022

Dear Ms Nokes,

I am writing to you and the Committee regarding the one-off evidence sessions on Black Maternal Health of 30 March¹ and 13 July². During these, there was discussion of the Office for National Statistics (ONS) supply of data to the National Perinatal Epidemiology Unit (NPEU) for their work on Mothers and Babies: Reducing Risk through Audits and Confidential Enquiries across the UK (MBRRACE-UK). I hoped to clarify the ONS position and reassure the Committee.

We send data on live births, still births and maternal deaths (both linked and unlinked) on a regular schedule to the NPEU to assist them in their work. This includes quarterly extracts, which are provisional data, and final annual refreshes. NPEU also rely on other data sources and suppliers as well as the ONS.

Over recent years, we have improved the timeliness of the delivery of data as much as possible, given limiting factors such as death registration delays. However, recently we have not always been able to meet this improved schedule because of impacts of the pandemic; primarily a backlog of birth registrations which local registry offices have been working through.

At all times, we have kept NPEU informed about any delays, and we are committed to continuing to enable their important work. In addition, my team will be meeting with their director in early autumn to explore any further improvements that can be made.

Yours sincerely,



Emma Rourke

¹ <https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/10072/pdf/>

² <https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/10600/pdf/>