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**Professor Sir Ian Diamond | National Statistician**

Dame Jackie Doyle-Price MP  
Chair, Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

15 May 2024

Dear Dame Jackie,

Congratulations on your appointment as Chair of the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee (PACAC). Sir Robert Chote, Authority Chair, and I are delighted to be able to continue discussing the work of the UK Statistics Authority with the Committee, under your new leadership.

As I am sure you will recall from your previous membership of PACAC between 2020 and 2022, the Authority is an independent statutory body established under the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 which reports directly to the UK and devolved Parliaments. The Authority is made up of the Office for National Statistics (ONS), the largest independent producer of official statistics in the UK, and the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR), its regulatory arm.

Alongside offering my congratulations, it is an opportune moment to share with you that the latest *Public Confidence in Official Statistics report (2023)*<sup>1</sup> has been published. This research is commissioned by the Authority, and the final report is independently produced and published by the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen). I am pleased to share that the report finds that the public confidence in official statistics continues to be high.

87% of survey respondents said they trust in the ONS. Similarly, 85% of respondents said they trust the statistics produced by the ONS. While there is a slight drop of two percentage points for each measure compared to 2021, these are not statistically significant and continues the established trend of high levels of trust in the ONS overall among the public.

This reported trust in the ONS also remained high whether or not respondents said they used ONS statistics. 82% of non-users and 99% of frequent users who responded to the question reported that they trust in ONS. It is vitally important to the ONS to see this trust be maintained and built upon, and we were very pleased to see that 72% of respondents agreed that statistics produced by the ONS were free from political interference. When

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<sup>1</sup> <https://natcen.ac.uk/publications/public-confidence-official-statistics>

asked why they trust ONS, 63% of respondents agree that ONS “did not have a vested interest in, or manipulate the results”, and 56% agree that ONS “are experts in statistics”.

Members of the Committee may also be interested to note that the profile of the OSR has risen since previous years, with 44% of respondents having heard of the OSR, up three percentage points. Awareness of the Authority has also increased, with 22% of respondents reported to have had some or a great deal of knowledge of the Authority whilst 28% had heard the name.

Awareness of the ONS remains high, with 73% of respondents reporting awareness of the organisation. This figure is very slightly lower than in 2021 (74%). However, with events such as the 2021 Census and the COVID-19 pandemic taking place in 2021, we are unsurprised to note a decrease in the reported awareness of the ONS in 2023.

We welcome this report wholeheartedly and take pride in the trust we have cultivated among the public and our users. We are pleased to see continued high levels of public awareness of the value of independently produced statistics.

A copy of the report is annexed to this letter for the Committee’s information. I hope that you find it an interesting first glance into the importance of the work that we do, which we look forward to discussing with you on 4 June.

Please do let us know if we can assist the Committee further with this, or with any other matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ian Diamond', written in a cursive style.

**Professor Sir Ian Diamond**