
Ed Humpherson, Director General for Regulation

William Wragg MP
Chair, Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA
(by email)

28 April 2021

Dear Mr Wragg,

Thank you for your letter of 15 April in relation to your Committee's inquiry on COVID-19 vaccine certification, in which you asked what role the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) plays in regulating the data produced by commissioned private organisations for government.

OSR has no direct role to regulate the data produced by commissioned private organisations for government, but we have pushed for the publication of such data by government (with due regard to rules of confidentiality). We have been particularly active in this regard because of the prominence and importance of research to enable government to manage the pandemic. We have advocated the three pillars of trustworthiness, quality and value from the Code of Practice for Statistics¹ and we encourage government departments, when commissioning research, to ask their research suppliers to demonstrate how they work in line with the three pillars of the Code.

On 5 November 2020, OSR published a statement on transparency², relating to any statistics and research referred to publicly. It noted that: *"In the context of the pandemic there are three things which governments should consistently do to support transparency:*

- *where data are used publicly, the sources of these data or the data themselves should be published alongside any press briefing and associated slides to allow people to understand their strengths and limitations*
- *where models are referred to publicly, particularly to inform significant policy decisions, the model outputs, methodologies and key assumptions should be published at the same time*

¹ <https://code.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/>

² <https://osr.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/news/osr-statement-regarding-transparency-of-data-related-to-covid-19/>

- *where key decisions are justified by reference to statistics or management information, the underlying data should be made available.”*

We have also been seeking feedback on our Interventions Policy³ and expect to publish a final version in May 2021. In formulating the final version, we will consider any recommendations about OSR’s role made by this Committee.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ed Humpherson', with a stylized, cursive script.

Ed Humpherson
Director General for Regulation

³ <https://osr.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/policies/our-interventions-policy/>



PACAC (Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee)

House of Commons · London SW1A 0AA

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Professor Sir Ian Diamond
National Statistician
1 Drummond Gate
London
SW1V2QQ

15th April 2021

Dear Sir Ian,

Government research

The Committee has been very grateful for the views that you have provided in recent months as part of the Covid-19 Data Accountability inquiry. Our work has now moved to considering covid-19 vaccination certification, and to aid with this, I would be grateful if you could please provide the Committee with answers to the following questions.

- What process does the ONS have in place to maintain high quality survey design when working at pace?
- What approach does the ONS take to ensure quality questionnaire design?
- Does the ONS have a role to play in sharing best practice around survey design?
- What role does the OSR play in regulating the data produced by commissioned private organisations for government?
- What work has been done to develop data around vaccine certification?

Could you please also provide copies of any survey reports about the Covid vaccine or attitudes to Covid vaccine certificates or, if these have not yet reported, a list of the survey questions used.

I would appreciate a response by the 28th April 2021. I will be placing this letter, and your response, in the public domain.

Yours ever,

William Wragg MP

Chair, Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee