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**Chair of the UK Statistics Authority, Sir David Norgrove**

To: Leaders of UK political parties

4 November 2019

I write to ask for your support and leadership to ensure that the use of statistics during this general election campaign serves the public good.

The UK Statistics Authority has the statutory objective to promote and safeguard the production and publication of official statistics. My predecessors and I have in the past been obliged to write publicly about the misuse of statistics in both pre-election and pre-referendum periods. Statistics can be a powerful support for an argument but misuse damages their integrity, causes confusion and undermines trust. It can also lead debate to focus too much on the statistics themselves, distracting from the issues at hand. This is particularly important during the intense public scrutiny of an election campaign, where misinformation can spread quickly.

I would ask that statistical sources should be clear and accessible to all; any caveats or limitations in the statistics should be respected; and campaigns should not pick out single numbers that differ from the picture painted by the statistics as a whole.

I am sending identical letters to the leaders of the main political parties, with a copy to the Cabinet Secretary.

Yours sincerely,



**Sir David Norgrove**