



Department
of Health &
Social Care

*From the Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care*

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Sir David Norgrove Chair,
UK Statistics Authority,
1 Drummond Gate,
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11 June 2020

Dear David,

Thank you for your letter of 2nd June setting out your concerns with our presentation of statistics on testing. We spoke later that day and I understand you have also spoken to Baroness Harding who leads the Test and Trace programme.

The testing programme has been set up at great speed over the last two months in the face of enormous urgent need. While standing up the programme and delivering the substance necessary, we have also sought to produce a range of statistics, in a transparent and open way, to allow people to understand what is being delivered. We are inevitably having to work through some challenging issues as the data systems behind these statistics are developed at great pace. I said in my first letter that I am keen for us to work closely with your team on developing the presentation on the range of information we publish.

Going forward I propose two outputs:

- First NHS Test and Trace will be publishing a weekly release which will set out core metrics on its operational performance. This will focus on the volumes of people covered by the programme, the speed of the user journey through the programme (e.g. test turnaround times) and overall outcome measures. I know that the NHS Test and Trace has been and will continue to engage with your team and the ONS in developing this publication.
- Separately to set out our understanding of the progress of the pandemic through the community my Department is working with ONS, PHE and others to present the best estimates of prevalence, incidence rates and antibodies on an ongoing basis in a co-ordinated way.

ONS and DHSC will work together to ensure these bulletins are coherent and aligned and present a clear overview of the progress of testing and the progress of the pandemic.

While we continue to publish daily updates on testing numbers. I've asked my officials to continue to work with you on improving the presentation of these. I have asked the

Department's Head of Profession for Statistics - Stephen Balchin – to write to the Office for Statistics Regulation with periodic updates on the specific points in your letter.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Matt". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

MATT HANCOCK