
Chair of the UK Statistics Authority, Sir David Norgrove

Monica Lennon MSP
Scottish Labour Shadow Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care
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The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
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22 June 2020

Dear Ms Lennon,

Thank you for your letter of 11 June about COVID-19 testing statistics published by the Scottish Government. You point to a number of areas for potential improvement to the published data, and the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) have discussed these with Public Health Scotland and the Scottish Government.

In April, OSR [reviewed](#) COVID-19 surveillance and registered deaths data across the UK, including information released by the Scottish Government and National Records of Scotland. OSR are in regular contact with producer bodies in Scotland, and [a recent blog](#) by our Director General for Regulation acknowledged the wide range of management information being published in Scotland. OSR welcomes the way these bodies are responding to its recommendations, as described for example in a [recent Scottish Government blog](#) about future data releases and improvements.

You also raised some particular points in relation to testing data in Scotland.

Testing data are collected through two pathways in Scotland: via NHS Labs (data collected by Health Protection Scotland) and Regional Testing Centres which form part of the expanded UK Government testing programme (data reported through the DHSC from contractors who operate the centres). I understand that data quality issues and timeliness of the data flows from these sites have hindered the release of the data so far by Public Health Scotland. However as of 15 June they are published on the [Scottish Government website](#). I welcome this progress and would encourage further discussion with users and OSR, with a view to continued improvement.

You asked about care home data and Test and Protect figures.

- On 10 June, Scottish Government published weekly data on COVID-19 in adult care homes in Scotland '[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): adult care homes - additional data](#)'. These data were subsequently revised. I am satisfied that the revision was made and signposted appropriately in accordance with the Code of Practice for Statistics (T3.9).

- On 10 June, Public Health Scotland published test and protect figures for the first time as part of [their weekly COVID-19 report](#). We understand that the Test and Protect programme is in its infancy and the granularity of the data will be improved in the coming weeks. Scottish Government and Public Health should publish their plans to ensure the public are informed of any developments.

The Office for Statistics Regulation will continue to liaise with Scottish Government and Public Health Scotland as they seek to improve the quality and range of statistics available in Scotland.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Norgrove". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Sir David Norgrove