



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Donald Cameron MSP  
MSP for Highlands and Islands Region

Professor Sir Ian Diamond  
UK National Statistician  
UK Statistics Authority  
Statistics House  
Cardiff Road  
Newport, NP10 8XG

05/03/2021

Dear Sir Ian,

**Misleading statistics reported by the National Clinical Director for Scotland**

I write to you regarding the above matter.

You may be aware of recent media reports concerning a statistic that was used by the National Clinical Director for Scotland, Prof. Jason Leitch, at the Scottish Government's daily COVID-19 briefing on Friday 26th February 2021.

In response to a question by Chris Musson of the Scottish Sun, who raised a comment by Prof. Mark Woolhouse that Scotland did not come close to eliminating COVID-19 in the summer of 2020, as claimed by the Scottish Government, Prof. Leitch stated that 'nobody died of Covid for a month between the 17th of July and the 18th of August. Nobody died of Covid between the 17th of July and the 18th of August, 28 days after a positive Covid test.'

While this particular statistic may be technically true, I am concerned that it could be misleading, as it does not include deaths where a doctor determined that COVID-19 was a factor in the death.

Additionally, in the same news conference Prof. Leitch stated this fact again in response to a question on Prof. Woolhouse's comments, from Georgina Hayes of The Telegraph, he stated, 'We had a month with nobody dying of Covid, three months after a lockdown'.

The National Records for Scotland indicated that in the same period that Prof. Leitch referred to, there were 24 people who died where COVID-19 was mentioned on the death certificate.

I would be grateful if you could investigate the claim made by Prof. Jason Leitch, and take appropriate action as you see fit.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

**Donald Cameron MSP**  
**Shadow Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport**  
**Member for the Highlands and Islands Region**