
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,



Ed Humpherson
Director General for Regulation

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