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

Humza Yousaf MSP  
Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care  
(by email)

7 October 2021

Dear Cabinet Secretary,

Today, the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) has published its review; *Improving health and social care statistics: lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic*.<sup>1</sup>

The pandemic resulted in a huge public appetite for data and statistics. We have seen a remarkable response from producers of data and analysis to meet this demand, in many cases overcoming challenges which would previously have seemed insurmountable. The pandemic has also drawn attention to existing challenges for health and social care statistics. I am sure you would agree that the health system needs both to learn lessons and to build on its achievements in this area.

The pandemic also highlighted the importance of transparency, so essential for building public confidence in statistics and in government decisions based on them. When statistics and data are quoted publicly by ministers or senior officials, they should be supported by a publication which provides the data in an accessible form with appropriate explanations of context, limitations, and sources.

During the pandemic, senior statistical roles within the Scottish Government and Public Health Scotland supported a good understanding across Government of the value of statistics and data, and the standards they should meet. It is important that statisticians continue to be able to demonstrate their independence to support public trust in data and evidence.

I would be happy to meet with you to discuss these topics further.

Yours sincerely,



**Sir David Norgrove**

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<sup>1</sup> [Improving health and social care statistics: lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic](#), Office for Statistics Regulation, 7 October 2021