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

Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP  
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care  
(by email)

7 October 2021

Dear Secretary of State,

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.

In England the number of organisations responsible for the production and publication of health data and statistics creates additional complexity. It is important that there is strong leadership across health bodies. This will support the release of data which offers a coherent picture and answers the questions of most interest to society, such as the effectiveness of government policy and an understanding of public health.

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