

---

**Ed Humpherson | Director General for Regulation**

William Wragg MP  
Chair, Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

18 May 2020

Dear Mr Wragg,

Thank you for your letter of 18 May 2020, regarding the use of unpublished data in public by the Government. I will of course raise any instances in future with you and the Committee, and am grateful for your support of the work of the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR).

In relation to your letter, OSR has today published a statement which outlines our position and expectations on the use of management information by government and other public bodies<sup>1</sup>.

We recognise the importance of management information to the operations of government, particularly during times of rapid change, such as the current COVID-19 pandemic, where there is an increased need for timely and detailed data.

The statement sets out three principles that producers and users of management information should be guided by:

- **Equality of access:** When management information is used publicly to inform Parliament, the media and the public, it should be published in an accessible form, with appropriate explanations of context and sources.
- **Regulatory intervention:** In cases where management information is quoted and is material to public debate, we will consider a public intervention to highlight the failure to preserve equality of access.
- **Proportionality:** We recognise there will be occasions when ministers refer briefly or in passing to the management information they have access to in responding to questions. We will be proportionate in judging when we step in, and we will distinguish between a one-off use that is marginal to the issues of interest, and those figures that are material to public debate.

Please do let me know if any questions.

Yours sincerely,



**Ed Humpherson**

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/news/covid-19-production-and-use-of-management-information-by-government-and-other-official-bodies/>