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**Professor Sir Ian Diamond | National Statistician**

Dame Meg Hillier MP  
Chair, Treasury Committee  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

03 March 2025

Dear Dame Meg Hillier,

Thank you for your letter of 14 February, following up on our evidence session with your Committee on 4 February. As I mentioned during the session, we are grateful for your interest in this important area of work.

In response to the request in your letter, I can commit to providing regular updates on the progress of the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and the Transformed Labour Force Survey (TLFS), and any emerging issues of note, to both this Committee and the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee (PACAC). In the first instance, I will write to the Committee with an update following the upcoming decision regarding the future timings of the TLFS.

During the session, I promised to write regarding two further points.

#### Budget

We discussed the efficiencies the Office for National Statistics (ONS) made in 2024. Following clarification from colleagues, I wanted to confirm that by the end of the 2024/25 financial year we estimate that the annual effect of cumulative efficiencies and savings generated across the SR21 period will be £39.2m. This equates to 9.9% of forecast net expenditure estimated at £396m for 2024/25. I would be grateful if the transcript could be updated accordingly.

#### Public contact details

We also discussed the impact of contacting the public via telephone during the pandemic, the potential of using other contact methods to improve survey response rates and if the ONS requires additional powers to access contact details.

The ONS currently uses both mobile phone and landline numbers to contact respondents. The Transformed Labour Force Survey (TLFS) sample of household addresses is telematched using commercially available datasets of mobile and landline numbers. This

approach typically provides a phone number of varying quality for approximately 30% of addresses. Email addresses are less useful as they cannot be linked to an address, and we are not assured of their security, so we only use these where they have been provided to us by the respondent during our first interview with them. This enables us to contact them to ask them to complete later waves of the survey.

I am content that the ONS currently has the legislative framework it requires to obtain the data we need to deliver our surveys and contact respondents. Our new Survey Innovation and Research hub will accelerate our work this year to increase response rates and maximise respondent engagement across our surveys.

Thanks again for interest and as I mentioned in the session, I would be very happy to welcome you and your Committee to our office in Newport, Wales.

I am copying this letter to Simon Hoare MP, Chair of PACAC.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ian Diamond', written in a cursive style.

**Professor Sir Ian Diamond**