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**Director General for Regulation**

Sarah Wilkinson  
Chief Executive, NHS Digital  
(by email)

22 May 2019

Dear Sarah

**OFFICE FOR STATISTICS REGULATION REVIEW OF NHS DIGITAL'S DATA ACCESS AND SHARING PROCESSES**

We have today published an update of our work looking at NHS Digital's data access and sharing processes. We recognise that NHS Digital's Data Access Request Service (DARS) shares our ambition to see data being used more effectively to provide important insights about the population's health. DARS has introduced significant improvements to help support users to access data, with appropriate safeguards in place to maintain public confidence. As set out in our update, the challenge now is for NHS Digital to communicate these improvements effectively. It will also be important to involve users and other interested organisations in future changes to access arrangements, and to monitor their impact.

The next stage of this work will focus on identifying ways to ensure that the full potential of NHS Digital's data can be realised. It will address two areas:

- How can users with innovative or complicated proposals be supported to access health data in England?
- How can data users and NHS Digital work together to improve data quality and documentation?

We are speaking to organisations with a common interest in achieving these objectives and will report our final recommendations in September.

The positive contribution of your staff throughout this work has been very much appreciated. We look forward to engaging with the DARS team about data access issues on an ongoing basis from now on.

Your sincerely



Ed Humpherson

Director General for Regulation