
Director General for Regulation

Duncan Selbie
Chief Executive
Public Health England
(by email)

26 May 2020

Dear Duncan

Publication of data used by Ministers

I am writing to welcome the publication of sero-surveillance data by Public Health England.

The background is that at the daily media briefing on 21 May, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care quoted unsourced figures for the percentage of people in London and nationally with COVID-19 antibodies. My team approached Public Health England on 22 May and your colleagues confirmed that these figures came from unpublished data from the PHE Surveillance Cell.

Following our approach, Public Health England published the data on 22 May.

Our expectation, set out in our public statement of 18 May, is that where unpublished data are used by Ministers in significant public statements, they should promptly be made available to all. Public Health England's publication of these data is in line with this principle and supports equality of access to data used in public debate. It is particularly good that you published the data so quickly after our approach.

I am copying this letter to William Wragg MP, Chair of the House of Commons Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Select Committee.

Yours sincerely



Ed Humpherson
Director General for Regulation