
Ed Humpherson, Director General for RegulationJames Wells
(by email)

15 December 2021

Dear Mr Wells

Use of data on patients in specialist care by vaccination status

Thank you for your emails. We have reviewed the tweets by the Secretary of State for the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and associated article published by [The Times](#).

Today I have [written to NHS England & Improvement \(NHSE&I\)](#) to welcome the [publication of statistics](#) about the number of patients in specialist care by vaccination status. These statistics support the statement in The Times that, according to the latest data, 90% of patients in specialist care were unvaccinated. I have reminded NHSE&I about the importance of ensuring that any figures referred to publicly are made equally available to all. This helps individuals to verify the data and understand any potential limitations.

The Secretary of State's [first tweet](#) should have stated that 90% of patients with COVID-19 in specialist care (those receiving Extra Corporeal Membrane Oxygenation) were unvaccinated, rather than all patients in critical care (often referred to as ICU). The most up-to-date information published at the time of this tweet showed that around three quarters of patients admitted to critical care units with COVID-19 were unvaccinated. [These data were updated](#) on 10 December and the report now states, "*The percentage of patients admitted to critical care with confirmed COVID-19 that were unvaccinated decreased from 75% in May 2021 to 48% in November 2021 (Figure 27), consistent with the decreasing proportion of the general population who were unvaccinated*". According to statistics published by the UK Health Security Agency, about 39% of COVID-19 patients admitted overnight to hospital via emergency care are unvaccinated. In the light of this information the Secretary of State has published an [updated tweet](#).

As per our [interventions policy](#), we take a proportionate approach to whether and how we intervene in the use of statistics. In this case, we have ensured that any unpublished data referred to publicly are published and have also raised the issue with the Secretary of State for DCMS's office.

We would be happy to meet with you should you wish to discuss our role in protecting the use of government statistics.

Yours sincerely

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

Ed Humpherson
Director General for Regulation