
Director General for Regulation

Chris Mullin
Director of Analysis
Department for Health and Social Care
(By email)

26 January 2022

Dear Chris,

Thank you for taking the time to talk to us about our concerns regarding use of unpublished data related to Omicron in public statements. It was good to hear about the work that analysts in the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and other health bodies are doing to support transparency of data. It is clear we have the same aspiration of ensuring that the data and analysis produced and used by your department support decision making by Government and the public, and enable the public to hold Government to account.

The focus of our discussion was the work you and your teams are doing to support public use of data by DHSC. It was positive to hear the actions you are taking to reduce the risk of unpublished data being quoted publicly, as well as the approach you take when this may occasionally occur inadvertently.

You outlined work DHSC is doing with your Arm's Length Bodies and the Office for National Statistics to ensure collaboration across organisations and support a clear narrative for health statistics. This is supported by the newly formed Health Statistics Leadership Forum and by the work you have been doing to outline clear principles and processes within the department, for example for coherence of methodologies and definitions and an approach to resolving any differences.

You also told us about the measures you have put in place within DHSC, including a statistics briefing hub and having an analyst embedded within the Secretary of State's private office. These actions should support use of appropriate data in public statements and speeches.

It has clearly been a challenging period, with you and colleagues working at speed in the face of considerable uncertainty. I am grateful for your ongoing commitment to the principles of transparency, including through the daily Omicron updates. This transparency supports trust in data and organisations that publish these data.

Yours sincerely



Ed Humpherson
Director General for Regulation