
Ed Humpherson, Director General for Regulation

Victoria Obudulu, Head of Profession for Statistics, UK Health Security Agency
Richard Laux, Chief Statistician, Cabinet Office

(by email)

4 March 2022

Dear Victoria and Richard

Use of unpublished data in February COVID-19 press briefing

I was disappointed that the Government's COVID-19 press briefing given on 21 February 2022 contained, at that time, an unpublished estimate of the cost of the UK Health Security Agency's Test and Trace programme for January 2022. The associated Government statement also contained a previously unpublished estimate of the cost of the Test and Trace programme in 2021/22.

Our expectation is that any data used publicly by Government should be published in an accessible form, with appropriate explanations of context and sources. I am, therefore, gratified to see that the data have since been published by the UK Health Security Agency¹.

On a further positive note, you have also indicated that you will work together to ensure the necessary processes are in place to reduce future risks of the use of unpublished data in press briefings organised by the Cabinet Office. You may wish to refer to our [Guidance for Statements about Public Funding](#) that provides some considerations for analytical teams who are supporting public funding announcements.

Yours sincerely



Ed Humpherson
Director General for Regulation

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nhs-test-and-trace-programme-2021-to-2022/nhs-test-and-trace-programme-2021-to-2022>