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By e-mail: danny.boyle@bemis.org.uk
Cc. Minister for Older People and Equalities

17 November 2020

Dear Rami Ousta and Jenni Keenan,

Continual monitoring of COVID deaths by Ethnicity and Religion

Thank you for your letter dated 28 October 2020.

As you are aware National Records of Scotland (NRS) published an analysis of deaths involving coronavirus (COVID-19) in Scotland, by ethnic group, in July 2020. We published an update to our initial analysis on Wednesday 11th November. In response to feedback from stakeholders, we asked registrars to contact informants who registered a death involving COVID-19 where no ethnicity information had been recorded in our initial dataset. The updated analysis looks at whether the conclusions from our initial analysis are changed by the additional data collected.

The results of the updated analysis are similar to the results from the initial analysis. Deaths amongst people in the South Asian ethnic group were more likely to involve COVID-19 than deaths in the White Scottish ethnic group over the study period. There was no evidence of a significant difference for the Chinese or White Irish groups. The number of deaths in other minority ethnic groups was too low to allow comparable analysis to be performed.

Ethnicity information continues to be provided on a voluntary basis as part of the death registration process, and some informants may be unable or unwilling to provide it. This means linkage to ethnicity information in the census is required to allow robust statistical analysis to be carried out. We have no immediate plans to conduct further linkage and analysis at this stage but we will continue to work with stakeholders and monitor the data collected through the registration process.

There are currently no plans to include religion as a monitoring characteristic in the death registration process.

I hope that you have found this reply to be helpful.

Yours sincerely



PAUL LOWE
Chief Executive