Dear Fiona,

I am pleased to see that the Health and Social Care (National Data Guardian) Act received Royal Assent. The National Data Guardian will play an important role in maintaining the confidence of the public and patients in the use of their data. I look forward to a positive relationship with you and the office of the National Data Guardian.

I have written to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care requesting that the role of National Data Guardian be added to the list of roles subject to a Pre-Appointment Hearing before the Committee. The Committee believes that the National Data Guardian plays a key role in protecting and safeguarding the public’s rights and interests. It is also important that the National Data Guardian holds the confidence of the public in being seen as independent of the Government. The Secretary of State has yet to reply to the request.

I wish you all the best and look forward to seeing the work of the National Data Guardian progress.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Sarah Wollaston MP
Chair of the Committee
Dear Sarah,

Thank you very much for your letter of 3 January.

I agree strongly that it is important that the National Data Guardian is independent of Government and seen to be so.

Thank you for raising the role that your Committee could play in ensuring this by conducting a Pre-Appointment Hearing. I look forward to hearing how this progresses.

With best wishes,

Dame Fiona Caldicott, MA FRCP FRCPsych
National Data Guardian