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[by email]

18 July 2017

Dear Ben,

Thank you for your letter of 13 July seeking exceptional pre-release for a number of economic statistics to support the work of the Bank of England. I am very grateful to the Bank for your constructive approach and support following the decision to end regular pre-release access to statistics.

On 15 June the National Statistician announced that pre-release access to the ONS statistics would end from 1 July. In addition, he said that *'Should there be a need for exceptional pre-release access to particular individuals for a specific release this would be fully transparent'*. Before addressing your specific request, I thought it would be useful to record how we would approach the issue of exceptional circumstances.

The overarching principle is that an exceptional circumstance is where someone would need to act or make a decision in the public interest on the basis of the statistics. Not granting pre-release in such a case runs the risk of decisions being made on the basis of out of date information.

On that basis and having discussed this with the National Statistician, we are happy to grant you pre-release access as requested. Turning to the specific releases and instances:

1. Consumer Price Inflation that falls on 12 September with pre-release access granted such that the data are available for the MPC's discussion meeting at 09.30 on Friday 8 September 2017.
2. Consumer Price Inflation that falls on 12 December 2017 with pre-release access granted such that the data are available for the MPC's discussion meeting at 10.00 on Monday 11 December 2017.
3. Labour Market Statistics that fall on 13 September with pre-release access granted such that the data are available for the MPC's discussion meeting at 09.30 on Friday 8 September. The amount of data we can make available this far in advance of publication will need to be discussed closer to the time of publication.
4. Labour Market Statistics that fall on 13 December with pre-release access granted such that the data are available for the MPC's discussion meeting at 10.00 on Monday 11 December.

5. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) release scheduled for 26 July and 25 October - we will give you access 48 hours prior to release, but we will have further discussions as to exactly the detail of what level of detail we provide closer to the time.

We will send you the Consumer Price Inflation and Labour Market Statistics 30 minutes prior to the start of the MPC meetings in question. This approach is consistent with previous practice where we have provided pre-release access for MPC meetings.

Ahead of any pre-release access, ONS would require the names of any and all individuals who will be accessing data ahead of publication.

In future years we will review dates with you to explore whether we can ensure sufficient distance between relevant ONS releases and MPC meetings further to reduce the need for exceptional pre-release access.



Jonathan Athow

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