

Ben Broadbent
Deputy Governor Monetary Policy
Bank of England
Threadneedle St
London
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[by email]

28 February 2018

Dear Ben,

Thank you for your letter of 16 February seeking exceptional pre-release for a number of economic statistics to support the work of the Bank of England.

As outlined in my previous letter, when the National Statistician announced an end to pre-release access to ONS statistics 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'*. The overarching principle being 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 Not granting pre-release in such a case runs the risk of decisions being made on the basis of out of date information.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 for three of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meetings covering five separate statistical releases. Turning to the specific releases and instances:

1. Consumer Price Inflation that falls on 20 March with pre-release access granted such that the data are available for the MPC's discussion meeting at 2:00pm on Thursday 15 March.
2. Consumer Price Inflation that falls on 19 December with pre-release access granted such that the data are available for the MPC's discussion meeting at 10:00am on Monday 17 December.
3. Labour Market Statistics that fall on 21 March with pre-release access granted such that the data are available for the MPC's discussion meeting at 2:00pm on Thursday 15 March.
4. Labour Market Statistics that fall on 11 September with pre-release access granted such that the data are available for the MPC's discussion meeting at 2:00pm on Friday 7 September.
5. Short Term Output Indicators that fall on 10 September with pre-release access granted such that the data are available for the MPC's discussion meeting at 2:00pm on Friday 7 September.

For each of these instances we will have further discussions as to exactly what level of detail we provide closer to the time and make the caveat that, although unlikely, figures may change in the final publications.

We will send you the Consumer Price Inflation, Short Term Output Indicators 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.

Requests for pre-release access continue to be reviewed on a case by case basis. With that in mind, and as I also explained in my previous letter, in future years we would hope to work with the Bank to review dates and explore whether we can ensure sufficient distance between relevant ONS releases and MPC meetings to minimise the need for exceptional pre-release access.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jonathan Athow', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jonathan Athow

Deputy National Statistician and Director General, Economic Statistics | Office for National Statistics