

Bank of England

Mike Keoghan

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Deputy Governor Monetary Policy

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By email only

Dear Mike

Bank of England's request for pre-release access to ONS LFS statistics in October 2023

The Bank of England continues to welcome all steps taken to ensure the integrity of official economic statistics and fully supports the decision to end regular pre-release access to ONS data.

As we have previously discussed, Part 2 of the Pre-Release access to Official Data Order 2008 provides for the National Statistician to grant exceptional pre-release access to particular Bank staff where, in his or her judgement, it is required for the Bank to discharge its policy functions most effectively. We agree that such access should be as transparent as possible.

The Bank writes to the ONS on an annual basis requesting whatever pre-release access might be necessary for the Bank to discharge its policy functions over the following year, in light of the ONS's data release timetable and our own schedule of meetings of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC).

Since my letter dated 23 February 2023 requesting pre-release access to official statistics in 2023, the ONS's data release timetable for the Labour Force Survey estimates within the Labour Market Statistics release has been rescheduled.

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In line with the ONS [statement](#) released on 13 October, the publication of the next ONS Labour Force Survey, which had been due on Tuesday 17 October, has been pushed back slightly to give the ONS additional time to produce the best possible estimates of the labour market using the available data sources. These data will now be published on Tuesday 24 October.

As I wrote in my February letter, the data contained within the Labour Market Statistics release are central to the Bank's assessment of the current economic outlook and so the MPC's monetary policy decision.

Given the exceptional circumstances that these data are released in the week prior to the MPC announcing its policy decision and publishing its Monetary Policy Report, including its forecasts for the labour market, the Bank requests pre-release access for MPC members and a very small number of Bank staff (those members of the MPC itself and the restricted number of Bank staff who are responsible for putting together the MPC's pre-publication forecast) to the ONS Labour Force Survey release due to be published on Tuesday 24 October. This request is in addition to the set of pre-release access requests made in my letter dated 23 February 2023.

In order that these data may be incorporated into the Bank's November Monetary Policy Report and associated forecast, please could pre-release access be granted such that the data are available by 12pm on Thursday 19 October.

I am copying this letter to Alan Castle and Simon Kirby (Bank of England).

Yours sincerely



Ben Broadbent