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**Director General for Regulation**

Mark Sedwill  
Permanent Secretary  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF

19 May 2015

Dear Mark,

Thank you for your letter dated 25 February 2015 and the associated transparency data<sup>1</sup> on passport applications.

The publication of these data resulted from the use of management information to inform a Ministerial statement. At that time, just over nine months ago, there was a general need for information to enhance public debate on passport applications. Although the delay in the release of these transparency data has been considerable, I am pleased that the complete series of passport application figures from 2002 is now in the public domain. I would expect that the Home Office is re-evaluating its own procedures for gaining access to and processing this information given the length of time required for quality assurance prior to publication.

I would regard it as prudent to consider and better understand the wider range of potential uses and users of this information. If there is demand for regular, quality statistics in this area it may be appropriate to produce and publish this information as official statistics in the future. I recognise that this is a matter of judgement for the statistical Head of Profession, in the context of other statistical priorities.

I think it important to avoid situations when a Minister publicly uses statistical information which subsequently takes time to quality assure before it can be released in context. In cases where there is an unarguable immediate demand for further information, and where no current official statistics are available, an ad hoc statistical release (supported by appropriate information about data quality) may be appropriate. Your statistical Head of Profession would be able to advise you on this matter. This approach is one which the Authority welcomes in circumstances where, for example, the longer term demand for information has not, at that time, been established.

I am copying this letter to John Pullinger, the National Statistician; and David Blunt, the Head of Profession for statistics at the Home Office.

Yours sincerely,



Ed Humpherson

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hmpo-transparency-data-february-2015>