



Home Office

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Sir Michael Scholar
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Sir Michael

COMMENTS ON DRUGS SEIZURES

Thank you for your letter of 15 November.

The UK Border Agency, as part of the Home Office, takes its responsibilities under the UK Statistics Authority code of practice seriously and I am, and continue to be, rightly mindful of this and the Ministerial Code.

I understand that David Blunt, as Chief Statistician & Head of Profession for Statistics in the Home Office, held discussions within the department after the issuing of the press release in question and before the publication of the National Statistics on 10 November.

Discussions centred on how the UKBA could continue to publish up-to-date Management Information to inform and reassure the public of the important work that it carries out while honouring the principles and protocols of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

The press notice of 4 November was one of many in which the UK Border Agency highlights work done in this important area and makes it clear that figures are based on management information which is subject to change. This is in contrast with the Release of Official Statistics on 10 November, which is headlined "Statistical News Release", and ensures that no one could be confused.

In addition David Blunt ensured that the news release on 10 November accompanying the official figures contained a clear explanation of the differences between the management information released under embargo on 4 November and the official statistics – thereby helping maintain public confidence.

I can reassure you that the intention behind using management information on cocaine and heroin seizures was because they are identified as the drugs which cause the highest harm. This work therefore plays a key role in reassuring the public about what is being done to protect communities from illegal drugs.

I am of course happy for officials and press officers at the Home Office to continue to work closely with statisticians on all releases which involve Official Statistics.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee and the Chair of the Public Administration Select Committee, to Rob Whiteman, Chief Executive of the UK Border Agency, and to the Permanent Secretary of the Home Office and the Cabinet Secretary.

Yours sincerely
Damian Green

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