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**Chair of the UK Statistics Authority, Sir Michael Scholar KCB**

Steve Webb MP  
Minister of State for Pensions  
Department for Work and Pensions  
Caxton House  
Tothill Street  
London SW1H 9DA

15 August 2011

Dear Mr Webb

**TIMETABLE FOR PUBLICATION OF DEPARTMENTAL OFFICIAL STATISTICS**

I refer to your letter dated 29 July to Dame Anne Begg, Chair of the House of Commons Work and Pensions Committee, regarding her concerns about the reporting of statistics on Employment and Support Allowance: Work Capability Assessment in which you referred to the UK Statistics Authority.

In your letter you stated that the Department for Work and Pensions does not choose the release dates for the statistics, but instead that they are released on a timetable set out a year in advance by the UK Statistics Authority.

This is not correct. The UK Statistics Authority has no role in setting the timetable for publication of statistics produced by the Department for Work and Pensions, nor indeed any other government department. Publication dates for official statistics are chosen, not by Ministers, but by the Head of Profession for Statistics in each department following the principles of the *Code of Practice for Official Statistics*. These should be set out a year in advance, as you say.

Your Head of Profession for Statistics will be able to provide you with more information about the Code and the protocols for the release of official statistics.

I am copying this letter to Dame Anne Begg.

Yours sincerely



**Sir Michael Scholar KCB**