



Permanent Secretary

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Ed Humpherson
Office for Statistics Regulation
1 Drummond Gate
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24 November 2017

Dear Ed,

RE: BREACHES OF THE CODE OF PRACTICE FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS

Thank you for your letter of 23 November. I take this matter very seriously. Breaches of pre-release access arrangements have the potential to undermine trust in the department's statistics and detract from the positive work the department is doing to deliver ministers' priorities. As such I remain fully committed to ensuring we comply with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics and pre-release arrangements.

The recent breaches of pre-release access have been internal: no embargoed statistics have been released outside the department. I am conscious nevertheless that I need to do more to raise awareness across the department of the importance of both complying with the Code, and to ensure the Department's statistics meet, and are seen to meet, the highest levels of trustworthiness, quality and public value.

Earlier this week I gave a clear message to all directors in the department that getting this right is a high priority for me, and that while my statistics and communications teams have a central role to play, senior staff across the department also all have a responsibility in this space.

I have also asked my head of profession for statistics to review and strengthen our processes and controls. A range of activities are underway or planned, including:

- i. A programme of training sessions is underway with policy, communications, and private office staff across the department to ensure there is a high-level of awareness of statistics controls.
- ii. Strengthening the central statistics support team to provide stronger

oversight of statistics controls, including pre-release access arrangements.

iii. A review of the clearance processes for departmental statements which contain numerical information to ensure there is a sufficient analytical oversight of statistics used publicly.

iv. Exploring the possibility of embedding, full-time, a statistician in our media team to strengthen links between communication and analytical teams.

I am happy to discuss ways in which DfE can continue to improve its processes.

I have copied this letter to Neil McIvor, Head of Profession for Statistics, Mike Jones, deputy Head of Profession for Statistics and John Pullinger, the National Statistician.

Yours sincerely,



JONATHAN SLATER
PERMANENT SECRETARY