

Office for Statistics Regulation publication policy

The Office for Statistics Regulation publishes a range of documents. This policy sets out the practices we commit to when we publish these documents.

What do we mean by ‘publish’?

1. When we publish an output, we update our website with new text, either as new text within the website itself or as a separate downloadable document¹. We may print hard copies of some documents, but will only make these available after publication on our website, for example, at events.

Why do we make documents publicly available?

2. It is an essential responsibility of any public body to make its key outputs publicly available. This helps support public confidence in the body’s trustworthiness. In the case of the Office for Statistics Regulation, publishing outputs also:
 - a. demonstrates the work we do to ensure statistics serve the public
 - b. provides clarity on the trustworthiness, quality and value of different statistical outputs and groups of statistics
 - c. shows statistical producers what our key decisions have been, so that good practice can be shared more easily among the statistical community

What types of document do we publish?

3. Our policy identifies three distinct categories of published output:
 - a. Formal Regulatory decisions, including judgements on the National Statistics status of individual official statistics², and Assessment Reports of compliance with the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#). This category includes formal policy documents such as the Code and associated guidance.
 - b. Letters and statements responding to issues surrounding the dissemination and use of statistics in the public domain
 - c. A range of alternative outputs, which can include long form reports on the statistical system and our [Business Plan](#) through to presentations, blogs and updates to our website

What publication practices do we commit to?

4. We adopt different practices for these three categories.
5. Formal **Regulatory Decisions** are our key output, which communicate our decisions to users and producers of statistics. They will typically be based on substantial regulatory projects, ranging from a few weeks to several months, and will usually be part of our formal regulatory work programme. For these outputs, we will:
 - a. Publish these at 11am on a weekday³

¹ In PDF format

² These judgements usually take the form of a letter to the relevant Head of Profession for Statistics (or equivalent) in a producer organisation

³ We have chosen an 11am publication date to distinguish OSR outputs clearly from official statistics, which are published at 9.30am

- b. Provide advance notification of our plan to publish, unless the decision is an immediate one following a meeting of the Authority's Regulation Committee⁴. This advance notification will take the form of a rolling publication calendar which will give an indication of expected publication dates over the following six months
 - c. Notify the relevant organisation in advance of our intention to publish, at least a day before publication or more
 - d. Aim to accompany the publication on our website with notifications on social media (such as a Tweet, unless it is more appropriate to retweet another organisation's Tweet on the same subject)
 - e. For regulatory decisions with significant public interest, we may accompany the formal decision document (for example, the letter confirming designation as National Statistics or the Assessment Report) with a press statement
6. **Letters and statements on the dissemination and use of statistics** in the public domain often involve issues of concern to the public and the media and to which we respond as they arise. Our [interventions policy](#) sets out how we determine whether we publish our response to an issue. Unlike our formal regulatory decisions, they do not form part of a planned work programme and, where we do publish, we do not pre-announce their publication or publish at a fixed time. Instead we commit to:
- a. Providing an indication in our published [Issues Log](#) of cases we are working on that will lead to a public response
 - b. Publishing these letters as soon as they are signed off by either the Director General for Regulation, the Deputy Director for Regulation or the Authority Chair
 - c. Publish any initial correspondence we received. Unless the correspondent does not grant us permission to do so, our normal approach will be to publish the initial letter we received
7. For our **alternative outputs**, we will:
- a. Publish at 11am on a weekday, unless there are reasons not to – for example, if we are sharing slides used by a member of staff at a conference or if there are multiple outputs scheduled for the same day

How can you contact us?

8. If you have any comments on this policy, or if there is anything you would like to ask, please contact us by emailing regulation@statistics.gov.uk.

⁴ The Regulation Committee is a Committee of the Authority Board which oversees the work of the Office for Statistics Regulation. Its members are a subset of the Authority's non-executives and the Director General for Regulation. No executives involved in the production of statistics are members of the Committee. The Committee's meeting dates are published in advance on the OSR forward calendar