
Director General for Regulation

Paul Lincoln
Director General, Border Force
(By email)

18 October 2019

Dear Paul

The Authority's attention was recently drawn to a [news story](#) published on 5th July 2019 by the Home Office, Border Force, and UK Visas and Immigration. We were asked to consider the wording of your press release which originally stated that "Figures released today reveal that more than one million passengers from these seven countries have already used the system".

The Code of Practice for Statistics requires that methodologies and underlying data are published at the time a statement is made or that the figure is drawn from published and well sign-posted analyses. In this instance, the source of the 'one million' figure was unclear to the public and the methodology and data underpinning it was not published.

We approached the Home Office for clarification on the source of the figure. Our recommendations, based on conversations with the Home Office, take into account that:

- The 'one million' figure was estimated by compiling information from various different reports from an external supplier.
- The phrasing in the news story and the lack of supporting information on the figure used means the readers would not be clear on the quality of the statistic. Border Force have acknowledged that the statement should have referenced that the figure was an estimate from management information.
- The Code of Practice requires that statements containing statistics are verifiable and replicable by the public, or at the least clear about the quality of said statistic.

We conclude that the original story should have been clear about the source, including an adequate methodological and quality statement proportionate to the figure quoted. We recognise that the Home Office and Border Force have since amended the story to clarify that the figures quoted are drawn from estimates from the roll-out of the eGates programme.

Border Force, when releasing future news stories or statements containing statistics, should ensure the underlying data are published at the time a statement is made and be clear about the quality of data. We encourage Border Force to seek advice from its Head of Profession for Statistics on the appropriate communication of statistics.

I am copying this letter to Jon Simmons, Deputy Director for Migration and Border Analysis at the Home Office and John Flatley, Head of Profession for Statistics at the Home Office.

Your sincerely



Ed Humpherson

Director General for Regulation