

---

**Director General for Regulation**

Sir Ian Diamond  
National Statistician  
Office for National Statistics  
(By email)

24 March 2022

Dear Ian

**Alternative Release Times for Official Statistics – Making the Case for Public Good**

I am pleased to share with you today our [consultation findings](#) from our review of the release times for official statistics. The Chair and Board of the UK Statistics Authority has approved an amendment to the Code of Practice for Statistics Edition 2.0, to allow for the introduction of release times other than 9:30am, in cases where it is agreed that this will best serve the public good. This change will come into force on 5 May 2022.

The Office for National Statistics already publishes several key economic statistics at 7am. These alternative release times were agreed with OSR, to enable statisticians to speak directly to journalists and the public about their statistics during the pandemic, which has been a powerful means of ensuring the statistics were well used. However, as you are aware, we have received a range of comments raising concerns about the early release of these statistics: these views were reiterated in the consultation comments.

Being open about key decisions around release arrangements is central to maintaining the confidence of users in official statistics. At present, I feel that ONS has not made clear the public benefit of releasing the key economic statistics at 7am to its users, and how you are balancing competing demands. I strongly encourage you to engage with your users, and other stakeholders, to explain your release approach.

My policy and standards team are available to provide further advice as needed. I am copying this to Owen Brace, Head of Communications, and Rachel Skentelbery, Deputy Head of Profession for Statistics in ONS.

Yours sincerely



Ed Humpherson  
Director General for Regulation