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Dear Ed,

UPDATE ON PRE-RELEASE ACCESS LISTS

Thank you for your letter requesting an update on progress with our review of pre-release access lists. The Ministry of Justice publishes over 80 National and Official statistics releases every year: 1 monthly, 15 quarterly, 11 annual, and 2 biennial. Some cover a fairly narrow subject area – such as the monthly HMPPS Covid-19 statistics or quarterly Legal Aid statistics - while others bring together a wide range of statistics across a policy or operational area – for example the quarterly Offender Management statistics or biennial Women and the CJS statistics.

We have made good progress in reviewing and reducing pre-release lists by going back to first principles – that pre-release access should be limited to the minimum number of people necessary to allow the minister to respond or take action at, or shortly after the time of publication – translating that to an MoJ setting and implementing it iteratively to our statistical releases as they occur.

For the vast majority of our publications this means that pre-release lists are now substantially smaller than they were prior to the review. In addition, all pre-release lists remain under review with further reductions considered and implemented ahead of each publication.

A few annual and bi-annual outputs have not been yet produced since the review began, but reduced pre-release lists will be implemented when they are published later this year.

The exact number of people on a pre-release list varies between publications based on need in line with the general pre-release principle. Publications that span a wide policy or operational area, or multiple government departments, will necessarily have a longer pre-release list than publications with a narrow, MoJ specific focus.

We will write again in December with a final update once we have implemented the review across the full yearly cycle of publications.

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Nancekivell-Smith