
Ed Humpherson, Director General for Regulation

Matthew Rycroft
Permanent Secretary of the Home Office

(by email)

21 November 2022

Dear Mr Rycroft,

Transparency of Home Office Statistics

I am writing to you about recent concerns raised with us about the transparent release and use of Home Office statistics and data.

In particular, concerns have been raised relating to the use of unpublished data and statistics by Government Ministers in the following instances:

- The statement by Priti Patel (the then Home Secretary) on the 5 September 2022 in Parliament that 60% of arrivals on small boats over the summer of 2022 were Albanian nationals.
- Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's statement on the 2 November 2022 that the Government has increased the number of asylum caseworkers by 80%.
- Robert Jenrick, Minister for Immigration, told the Telegraph that one in five Albanian adult male migrants claim to be children.

Intelligent transparency supports public confidence and trust in statistics and the organisations that produce them and minimises the risk of misinterpretation. Public access to the data and statistics which inform policy decisions is important to allow public scrutiny and informed engagement.

We welcome the ad-hoc statistical release published by the Home Office on the [2 November](#) in response to Priti Patel's statement about the proportion of Albanians on small boats. However, this was published two months after these statistics were used in the public domain. This is a significant gap during which time these statistics were not equally accessible to all in line with the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#). We also note that statistics on asylum caseworkers and Albanian adult male migrants claiming to be children have not yet been published.

In line with our [expectations for intelligent transparency](#), where possible, public statements should draw on the latest published official statistics. Statistics and data

should be published in an accessible format with context and sources clearly explained, in advance or at the same time as their use in the public domain by officials and Ministers. Where unpublished data are referred to unexpectedly, the information should be published as soon as possible after any statement has been made – ideally on the same day as the analysis should already be available. Ad hoc releases are an effective way of supporting announcements in fast-moving situations where new management information, research or analysis is being used. Such releases need not be long, or technical – they are a way of making the data available in line with the principles of intelligent transparency.

Given the continued public interest in and use of immigration statistics, I urge the Home Office to review ways of working to ensure that the transparent release and use of Home Office data and statistics is the default in future. If we can help to take this forward in any way, please get in touch and my team would be happy to assist. More information is also available in our [regulatory guidance for the transparent release and use of statistics and data](#).

I am copying this letter to Simon Palmer (Director of Home Office Analysis and Insight), Jon Simmons (Head of Protection, Irregular Migration and Asylum Analysis and Migration Statistics) and Amy Baxter (Acting Head of Profession for Statistics).

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ed Humpherson', written in a cursive style.

Ed Humpherson
Director General for Regulation