



Ministry
of Justice

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15 December 2022

Dear Ed

FINAL UPDATE ON PRE-RELEASE ACCESS LISTS

We wrote to you in September 2022 with an update of the Ministry of Justice work to review and reduce our pre-release access lists. I am pleased to confirm that this review is now complete and I would like to share with you our findings.

In 2022, the Ministry of Justice has released 91 routine statistical publications. At the start of the review last December, the average length of our pre-release lists was 49. I am pleased to report that following considerable efforts, we have nearly halved the average list length to 25. Whilst there is still room for improvement, the length of our pre-release lists should be taken in the context of the breadth of Ministry of Justice policy and operational areas; publications which cover multiple government departments and the number and size of our Ministerial portfolios.

Equality of access to official statistics is a core principle of the Code of Practice for Statistics. We recognise that maintaining tight control of that access ahead of publication is an essential and ongoing endeavour, not a one-off exercise. Our review highlighted opportunities for creating a more robust approach to pre-release which we are in the process of implementing. These include:

1. improved pre-release discipline – for every release, we will re-confirm the required names and ensure that those absent, not required or temporarily deployed to other areas at the time of release are removed.
2. working closely with press and private offices to determine an approach that balances the requirements of the Code with the mechanisms for Ministerial briefing which allow Ministers to respond or take action at, or shortly after the time of publication.
3. rolling out refresher training on the Code of Practice to colleagues across data and analysis, policy, operations and private offices (planned for early 2023).

We will continue to work on driving down the size of our pre-release lists. I hope that the ongoing activities highlighted provide sufficient reassurance of the Ministry of Justice's commitment to upholding the equality of access principle.

Yours sincerely

Abigail Self