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**Ed Humpherson, Director General for Office for Statistics Regulation**

Michael Keoghan, Director General for Economic and Social Statistics, ONS (by email)

10 March 2025

Dear Mike,

**Alternative Release Time for Economic Statistics**

Thank you for sharing with us your assessment of your practice of releasing market-sensitive economic data outside of market trading hours at 0700, rather than the default release time for official statistics of 0930.

Under our [Alternative Release Times \(ART\) policy](#) it falls to the producer, in this case ONS, to periodically consider the need and public good case to continue with alternative release times. We [requested](#) that ONS carry out this review as our call for evidence as part of our Code Review attracted nine responses, who made the case for return to an 09:30 publication time. Given release times was not the primary focus on the consultation, the evidence was partial. Therefore, we asked ONS to assess the issue in a way that takes account of the full range of impacts, including public benefits. We also asked that this assessment be based on effective engagement with stakeholders.

Your [assessment](#) recommends continuing to release market-sensitive data at 0700. This is on the basis that it increases the visibility of key statistics for the public via the media, and so better serves the public good. Additionally, this mitigates the risk that ONS's website is not robust enough to manage the increased traffic that reverting to 0930 would likely lead to, which could risk orderly access to data for users. You note that ONS intends to reconsider this issue when it is assured that its new website and API are robust enough to manage the increased traffic and this has been demonstrated for a year. ONS is also committed to ensuring that this future review is not restricted to a binary choice of 0700 or 0930 but should look at all options, including times between these options.

We have considered our response to your assessment from the following perspectives:

- the importance of maintaining orderly release given the risks around the performance of the ONS website;
- the role of enhanced media coverage in making statistics more available and accessible, in turn serving the public good;
- the differing stakeholder views, and
- the impact on the functioning of the SONIA market.

We support your plans to continue releasing these market sensitive statistics at the alternative time of 0700 instead of 0930 for the moment. We recognise the value of increased visibility of key statistics and are keen to maintain the orderly release of these vital statistics. We note your approach to maintain these alternative release times until ONS is assured that its new website and API are robust enough to manage the increased traffic that moving from 0700 could lead to. At that point ONS should reconsider its approach, including whether there is an alternative option, which better meets the needs to users.

You may be aware that we periodically review ARTs to make sure they are still justified and warranted. To help us consider this one, we would welcome an update from ONS on its future review of an alternative release time for market sensitive economic statistics by 31 December 2025. If you think this date will cause you any problems, please let me know.

Please ensure the time of release, the reasons for using an alternative release time, and your plans for reviewing this, are clearly and widely communicated with users and other stakeholders with an interest in these statistics.

Yours sincerely,



Ed Humpherson  
Director General for OSR