

Bank of England

Emma Rourke

Deputy General for Health, Population
and Methods
Office for National Statistics
1 Drummond Gate
London
SW1V 2QQ

Ben Broadbent

Deputy Governor Monetary Policy

23 January 2024

By email only

Dear Emma

Bank of England's request for pre-release access to ONS National population projections in January 2024

The Bank of England continues to welcome all steps taken to ensure the integrity of official economic statistics and fully supports the decision to end regular pre-release access to ONS data.

As I have previously discussed with your colleagues at the ONS, Part 2 of the Pre-Release access to Official Data Order 2008 provides for the National Statistician to grant exceptional pre-release access to particular Bank staff where, in his or her judgement, it is required for the Bank to discharge its policy functions most effectively. We agree that such access should be as transparent as possible.

As I wrote in my letter to Mike Keohan, dated 23 February 2023, the Bank intends to write to the ONS on an annual basis requesting whatever pre-release access might be necessary for the Bank to discharge its policy functions over the following year, in light of the ONS's data release timetable and our own schedule of meetings of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC). I will write to Mike shortly. In the meantime, this letter covers a request for pre-release access to forthcoming National population projections: 2021-based interim release.

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Bank of England | Threadneedle Street | London | EC2R 8AH
+44 (0)20 3461 4444 | www.bankofengland.co.uk



As you will be aware, the data contained within the forthcoming National population projections: 2021-based interim release, play a critical role in the Bank's assessment of the current economic outlook.

Given the exceptional circumstances that these data are being released two days prior to the MPC announcing its policy decision and publishing its Monetary Policy Report, including its forecasts for the labour market, the Bank requests pre-release access for a very small number of Bank staff (those Bank staff who are responsible for assessing the role of the population projections with respect to the Bank's overall forecasts, along with those who incorporate this into the Monetary Policy Report).

In order that the ramifications of these data on the Bank's assessment of the economic outlook can be understood, and reflected in the Bank's Monetary Policy Report, please could pre-release access be granted such that the data are available by 5pm on Thursday 25 January.

I am copying this letter to Alan Castle and Simon Kirby (Bank of England).

Yours sincerely

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

Ben Broadbent