

Robert Chote
Chairman
Office for Budget Responsibility
102 Petty France
London
SW1H 9AJ

[by email]

19 February 2018

Dear Robert,

Thank you for your letter of 19 February seeking exceptional pre-release for a number of economic statistics to support the work of the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR).

When the National Statistician announced an end to pre-release access to ONS statistics he said that *'Should there be a need for exceptional pre-release access to particular individuals for a specific release this would be fully transparent'*. The overarching principle being that an exceptional circumstance is where someone would need to act or make a decision in the public interest on the basis of the statistics. Not granting pre-release in such a case runs the risk of decisions being made on the basis of out of date information.

On that basis, and having discussed this with the National Statistician, we are happy to grant you pre-release access as requested to enable you to provide HM Treasury with the third round of your economic forecast. The request covers four separate statistical releases;

48 hours pre-release access to:

1. Q4 2017 Second Estimate of GDP, due to be published on 22 February 2018
2. Q4 2017 Business Investment due to be published on 22 February 2018
3. December 2017 Index of Services due to be published on 22 February 2018

24 hours pre-release access to:

4. Labour Market Statistics due to be published on 21 February 2018

Ahead of any pre-release access, ONS would require the names of any and all individuals who will be accessing data ahead of publication.

Requests for pre-release access continue to be reviewed on a case by case basis.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jonathan Athow', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jonathan Athow

Deputy National Statistician and Director General, Economic Statistics | Office for National Statistics