

Ben Broadbent
Deputy Governor Monetary Policy
Bank of England
Threadneedle St
London
EC2R 8AH

[by email]

12 June 2020

Dear Ben,

Thank you for your letter of 3 June 2020 seeking to change the Bank's request for exceptional pre-release access, originally requested on 7 February¹, to a number of economic statistics to support the work of the Bank of England and the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC).

As outlined in previous letters, 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 the public benefit likely to result from such access significantly outweighs the detriment to public trust in official statistics likely to result from such access.

On that basis, and having discussed this with the National Statistician, the ONS grants the change to your request for exceptional pre-release access for the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meetings. Access will be granted for the following statistics:

The Consumer Price Index releases that fall on:

1. 17 June with pre-release access granted such that the data are available for the MPC's meeting at 09:30 on Monday 15 June.
2. 16 September with pre-release access granted such that the data are available for the MPC's meeting at 14.00 on Friday 11 September.
3. 16 December with pre-release access granted such that the data are available for the MPC's meeting at 10.00 on Monday 14 December.

The Labour Market Statistics releases that fall on:

1. 16 June with pre-release access granted such that the data are available for the MPC's meeting at 09:30 on Monday 15 June.
2. 15 September with pre-release access granted such that the data are available for the MPC's meeting at 14.00 on Friday 11 September.

¹<https://www.ons.gov.uk/news/statementsandletters/exchangeoflettersbetweenjonathanathowandbenbroadbentatthebankofenglandforexceptionalpre-releaseaccess>

3. 15 December with pre-release access granted such that the data are available for the MPC's meeting at 10.00 on Monday 14 December.

For each of these instances we will have further discussions as to exactly what level of detail we provide closer to the time and make the caveat that, although unlikely, figures may change in the final publications.

You have separately written to Sean Whellams at HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) requesting access to Pay as You Earn (PAYE) Real Time Information (RTI) data which are jointly used by the ONS to produce estimates of earnings and employment². In his response Sean, explains that the ONS will send you these data along with the other statistics to which you are being granted access.

We will send you the requested statistics 30 minutes prior to the start of the MPC meetings in question. This approach is consistent with previous practice where we have provided pre-release access for MPC meetings.

Ahead of any pre-release access, ONS will 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. With that in mind, and as I also explained in my previous letter, in future years we would hope to work with the Bank to review dates and explore whether we can ensure sufficient distance between relevant ONS releases and MPC meetings to minimise the need for exceptional pre-release access.

I am copying this letter to Sean Whellams and Katy Peters (HMRC)

Yours sincerely,



Jonathan Athow

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

²<https://www.ons.gov.uk/releases/earningsandemploymentfrompayasyouearnrealtimeinformationukjuly2014tomarch2020>