

Limiting pre-release access to statistics: A consultation document

H M Treasury – December 2007

Further to my previous submission on the '**Independence for statistics: A consultation document - H M Treasury – March 2006**' on 30 March 2006, I welcome the opportunity to comment on the above proposed legislation.

Under the European Statistics Code of Practice (adopted by the Statistical Programme Committee of the European Union on 24th February 2005) one of the sections in **Principle 6: Impartiality and Objectivity** states:

- *all users to have equal access to statistical releases at the same time and any privileged pre-release access to any outside user is limited, controlled and publicised. In the event that leaks occur, pre-release arrangements should be revised as to ensure impartiality.*

Consequently, I welcome the proposed new legislation, but I feel that with regard to any statistics that are pre-leased by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) in the United Kingdom should have transparency with regard to the recipients of such statistics both in name and organisation. By adopting the procedure of naming the recipients and their organisations of pre-release data, the general recipients of the statistical output of the ONS will be made aware of the destination of the pre-release statistics. Such a procedure will add value to and enhance the statistical output of the ONS and lead to greater integrity. Furthermore, it may, in fact, reduce the requests for pre-release statistics from some sources.

I trust that the foregoing view will be given due consideration.

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