

15 June 2017

Victory for RSS campaign to end pre-release access to ONS official statistics

The Royal Statistical Society (RSS) has welcomed today's announcement of an end to all pre-release access to official statistics produced by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). This extremely welcome change will come into effect from 1st July.

The announcement follows a major RSS campaign which culminated last month (8th May) when The Times published a RSS-led letter, calling for an end to pre-release access, with 114 signatories - the same number of people who currently have advance access to the official (and market-sensitive) labour market statistics.

The letter's signatories included RSS's President (Sir David Spiegelhalter), the Chair of the RSS National Statistics Advisory Group (Mike Hughes), the former National Statistician (Dame Jil Matheson) and an ex-Chair of the UK Statistics Authority (Sir Michael Scholar),

Commenting on today's announcement, RSS Executive Director, Hetan Shah, said: "This is extremely welcome news. It's a major achievement for the RSS and our members. It will reduce the opportunities for figures to be 'spun' and increase public confidence in official statistics. It will also lower the risk of market-sensitive information being leaked or abused. We hope it will set an example for other government departments to follow and bring forward the day when pre-release access to all official statistics is ended."

ENDS

Notes to editors

1. For more information, contact Mags Wiley, RSS Press & Policy Officer, on 020 7614 3920 or at m.wiley@rss.org.uk
2. See our letter to The Times and further information on our pre-release campaign here: <https://www.statslife.org.uk/news/3454-rss-pre-release-letter-to-the-times-5th-may-2017>
3. The Royal Statistical Society (RSS) founded in 1834 is one of the world's most distinguished and renowned statistical societies. It is a learned society for statistics, a professional body for statisticians and a charity which promotes statistics, data and evidence for the public good. Today the Society has nearly 8000 members around the world. www.rss.org.uk @RoyalStatSoc