
Chair of the UK Statistics Authority, Sir Michael Scholar KCB

Boris Johnson
Mayor of London
Greater London Authority
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Dear Mr Johnson

STATISTICS ON CRIME ACROSS THE LONDON TRANSPORT NETWORK

In your Press Release of 21 February on crime across the London Transport network you published statistics, as part of a media event to publicise the success of your policies, some time ahead of their normal release date in Transport for London's regular quarterly statistical bulletin.

I recognise that Transport for London's statistics are not, in fact, currently classified by the Cabinet Office as Official Statistics, so are not, as a matter of law, required to be in conformity with the provisions of the *Code of Practice for Official Statistics*. But statistics of such importance as those you cited should, surely, be treated with the same care and propriety as is now required by law for the most significant official statistics. I shall be writing to the Home Secretary and to the Minister for the Cabinet Office to express the view that Transport for London's statistics should be reclassified as Official Statistics, under section 6 of the Statistics Act 2007.

Whatever their answer, I believe that selective prior release, as in your Press Release of 21 February, was poor practice, and was damaging to public trust in the statistics produced by Transport for London.

The Code of Practice is very clear about this. It says that statistical reports should be published 'separately from any other statement or comment about the figures'; that 'no statement or comment – based on prior knowledge – is issued to the Press or published ahead of the publication of the statistics'; and that 'no indication of the substance of a statistical report is made public or given to the media' prior to publication.

Although under the Statistics Act Ministers are now legally obliged to comply with these principles, as matters stand this is not currently the case for you. However, in the interests of restoring public trust in government statistics, may I invite you to undertake in future to comply with the Code, as a matter of principle?

I look forward to hearing from you.

I am copying this letter to the Home Secretary, to the Minister for the Cabinet Office, to the National Statistician, and to Full Fact, the organisation which drew my attention to your Press Release.

Yours sincerely

Michael Scholar

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