



Home Office

Home Secretary

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UK Statistics Authority
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7th September

Dear Sir David,

Thank you for your letter of 31st August. As you suggest, I share your concerns.

I am clear that the approach taken by my statisticians with respect to the handling of the report on experimental exit checks data prior to publication was in accordance with the guidance for official statistics.

Home Office statisticians have been working closely with ONS in analysing the student migration and exit checks data. It was intended that the public should read both the Home Office and ONS reports together to obtain a proper understanding of what the exit data suggests about immigration compliance amongst current cohorts of international students and the important changes the Home Office introduced over the past six years to improve the student visa system.

As is usual, my chief statistician submitted his report on this matter and I note that this has now been placed on the UK Statistics Authority website. I can confirm that the department is taking this matter very seriously and, as our report states, has initiated an inquiry into how the leak occurred.

Your letter notes the degree of access provided to the statistics report ahead of publication. Some degree of pre-release access is essential in my view to allow Ministers to be properly briefed especially given the significant volume and breadth of migration related publications released that day, some of which we were unable to see in advance. It is important that myself, my Ministers and my department are fully briefed on matters that we have policy responsibility for. However my statisticians will consider whether in light of this breach the list of people with pre-release access should be reduced.

I am also copying this letter to the Minister for the Constitution and to Sir
Jeremy Heywood

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amber Rudd". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rt Hon Amber Rudd MP