

Mr Ed Humpherson
Director General for Regulation
Office for Statistics Regulation
1 Drummond Gate, London
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By email to ed.humpherson@statistics.gov.uk

15th November 2021

Dear Ed,

Delay in publication of Home Office's Stop and Search figures

I am writing to express concern about the change of the release date for the Home Office's Stop and Search figures. In particular, the Royal Statistical Society is concerned that delaying the publication when the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill is at the Committee Stage in the House of Lords risks undermining public confidence in national statistics.

The statistics were originally due to be published on 28 October 2021, but this was delayed until 18 November 2021 to allow for completion of quality assurance after the collection was changed from aggregates to individuals. We would expect that this would have been a planned delay in the release of the figures – the impact of the changes on processing should have been assessed and, if a delay was likely, this should have been pre-announced.

It is not currently possible to see when the change was announced – the [relevant webpage](#) does not contain that information. This is an important piece of information and we would be grateful if you could identify when the delay was announced.

If the delay was only announced near the planned publication date of 28 October, we would be interested to understand why the department did not anticipate the potential need for additional quality assurance work.

From our perspective, it is a concern that there is a perception in some parts of the media – for example, in the [Guardian](#) – that these national statistics have been delayed for political reasons and that there is not a clear trail of evidence to show that this delay was reasonable and announced in good time. Are you concerned about the public impact of this, given that the policing bill is currently passing through Parliament?

Yours sincerely



Stephen Penneck
Chair, RSS National Statistics Advisory Group

