

Dame Meg Hillier MP
Chair
Treasury Select Committee
House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA

Baroness Hogg and Dame Susan Rice
Non-executive members of the Office for Budget Responsibility
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9 February 2026

Dear Dame Meg,

Re: National Cyber Security Centre investigation into early access to OBR *Economic and fiscal outlooks*

We are writing to update you on the findings of the National Cyber Security Centre's (NCSC's) investigation report, *Early access to OBR Economic and fiscal outlook: NCSC analysis and technical recommendations*, which has been published today alongside the Treasury's Budget Security Review. The commissioning of this report was one of the key recommendations of our *Report of investigation into the November 2025 Economic and fiscal outlook publication error*, which was published on 1 December 2025. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the NCSC for conducting its investigation and completing its report so quickly and professionally.

Given the extreme seriousness of this event, which was, as the initial report made clear, the worst failure in the 15-year history of the OBR, and the speed with which the initial investigation was required to be conducted, the confirmation of some key points by the NCSC is highly important. In particular, the NCSC agrees:

- that there is no evidence that the premature access to the report was the result of hostile cyber activity, connivance, or someone pressing the publication button too early; and
- that this incident occurred because of a misconfiguration of the way in which WordPress was implemented.

However, the NCSC had access to more logging data than was available to our initial investigation. As we expected, using this additional information the NCSC report finds that the scale of early access to the November 2025 *Economic and fiscal outlook (EFO)* was much greater than we were able to identify in that brief initial period.

This new report provides evidence that of the very large number of premature downloads of the November 2025 *EFO*, all but 13 occurred after the *EFO*'s contents had already been distributed online by news outlets. Therefore, the vast majority of the successful early downloads of the *EFO* appear to have happened following the concerted initial attempt at early access which then opened the door to others.

The NCSC finds that there were repeated unsuccessful attempts to access the *EFO* which came from one user agent beginning on 25 November, until one of the IP addresses associated with this user agent achieved the first successful access to the report at 11:35 on 26 November. It is highly likely that these requests were performed by an automation of some kind.

The NCSC also confirms the same misconfiguration as identified in the original investigation enabled early access to the March 2025 *EFO*. It found 16 successful early accesses that all came from IP addresses associated with a single internet service provider. The NCSC did not find evidence of the access from a public sector account suggested in the December 2025 investigation.

The NCSC was not able to determine whether early access took place for prior *EFO*s. While this means this possibility cannot be ruled out, internal OBR investigations have determined that a 2022 change to the OBR's web configuration is what appears to have first introduced the vulnerability used in March and November 2025. Furthermore, the OBR believes that its use of less predictable file-path addresses prior to the October 2024 *EFO* means that early access prior to 2025 is less likely.

We welcome the NCSC's consideration of options for future OBR publications and the organisation's wider web presence, and its recommendation that future market-sensitive OBR publications are published on GOV.UK. The OBR Oversight Board agrees with this recommendation, and it is being implemented by the OBR immediately.

We are copying this letter to the Permanent Secretary to the Treasury, the NCSC, and Professor Ciaran Martin, who we again thank for his speedy and vital work as part of the original investigation. In line with OBR policy, this letter will be published on the OBR's website.

Yours Sincerely,



Baroness Hogg

Dame Susan Rice

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