

Cllr Simon Hogg
Leader of the Council
Wandsworth Council
(via email)

23 March 2026

Dear Cllr Simon Hogg,

As Interim Chair of the UK Statistics Authority, which oversees the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR), I am writing regarding statements made by Wandsworth Council that it has “frozen Council Tax for residents for the fourth consecutive year.” This follows concerns being raised with us directly regarding the public communication of these claims, which include a news piece¹, a web page², social media posts³, and through local promotional leaflets.

We have considered this claim against the Standards for the Public Use of Statistics, Data and Wider Analysis⁴, which are part of the Code of Practice for Statistics. While councils are not required to follow these standards, we strongly encourage all public bodies to do so, because the Standards for Public Use focus on whether the presentation of numerical information presented in the public domain supports public understanding.

Public confidence in statements based on data are best enabled when people can trust, verify and understand what they hear. A good test is to consider how a reasonable person would interpret the statement being made and ensure that this is not likely to be misleading in the absence of additional information.

In this context, we find it is likely that people would understand the term ‘frozen’ to relate to an increase in their total council tax bill. While some of Wandsworth Council’s communications do refer to “the main element” of council tax being frozen, they are unclear that residents’ council tax bills will still rise by a significant amount due to other local authority charges. While separate pages of the Wandsworth Council website provide detail on how the adult social care precept and Greater London Authority (GLA) charges affect the overall council tax bill⁵, this important context lacking from many of the promotional materials being used to promote the ‘freeze’. This does not meet the *Supporting understanding* standard within the

¹ <https://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/news/news-february-2026/council-tax-freeze-for-the-fourth-year-in-a-row/>

² <https://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/freeze/>

³ https://x.com/cllrsimonhogg/status/2022265077793960346?s=46&t=DIFjnVs1K4-w_U4x3G-bEw

⁴ <https://code.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/standards-of-the-code-of-practice/standards-for-the-public-use-of-statistics-data-and-wider-analysis-with-required-practices/>

⁵ <https://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/council-tax/council-tax-bands-and-charges/>

Standards for Public Use and has the potential to mislead those whose council tax bills are affected.

We encourage all public bodies to ensure statistics, data and wider analysis are communicated transparently, and with integrity, clarity and accuracy. As such, we ask you to consider the standards which require you to support understanding and, as the Code states, 'take proactive steps to prevent or minimise the risk of misinterpretation or misuse' of data related to Wandsworth Council's council tax announcements in the future.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Penny Young', with a stylized, cursive script.

Penny Young
Interim Chair