BREACH OF THE CODE OF PRACTICE FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS

This document reports a breach of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, or the relevant Pre-release Access to Official Statistics Orders, to which the Code applies as if it included these orders.

1. Background information

Name of Statistical Output (including weblink to the relevant output or 'landing page')

This report covers the breaches of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, protocol 2, practice 4 (09:30 releases). The report covers the period 1 January 2014 to 30 September 2014 which follows on from the period covered by the previous combined report.

These breaches have occurred because of known technical issues and limitations of the ONS website and release publication system which have led to delays in publishing. The breaches are being released as a combined report for this period since the root cause for all is the same. However, it should be noted that ONS has notified the UK Statistics Authority when the delays have occurred throughout the period. Other types of breaches of this protocol and practice are reported separately as they occur.

The table in section 2 lists all ONS breaches covered by this report from 1 January 2014 to 30 September 2014.

Name of Producer Organisation

Office for National Statistics (ONS)

Name and contact details of the statistical Head of Profession (Lead Official in an Arm's Length Body) submitting this report, and date of report

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See table below for a full list of outputs and dates

2. Circumstances of breach

Relevant Principle/Protocol and Practice

Protocol 2 release practices/Practice 4 issue releases at 09:30 - Issue statistical releases at the standard time of 9.30am on a weekday, to maintain consistency and to permit time for users to understand and respond to the information during normal working hours.

Date of occurrence

See table for a full list of outputs and dates

Table of Breaches to Protocol 2, Practice 4 from 1 January – 30 September 2014

	Output	Date of release	Time of release of the statistical bulletin
1	Regional Labour Market Statistics, January 2014	22 Jan 2014	09:32:30
2	Public Sector Finances - Dec 2013	22 Jan 2014	09:33:15
3	Gross Domestic Product: Preliminary Estimate, Q4 2013	28 Jan 2014	09:32:43
4	Regional Labour Market Statistics, February 2014	19 Feb 2014	09:31:41
5	Regional Labour Market Statistics, March 2014	19 Mar 2014	09:32:03
6	Public Sector Employment, Q4 2013	19 Mar 2014	09:32:48
7	Regional Labour Market Statistics, April 2014	16 April 2014	09:32:12
8	Regional Labour Market Statistics, May 2014	14 May 2014	09:31:03
9	UK Trade in Goods Analysed in Terms of Industry, Q1 2014	11 June 2014	09:31:00
10	Public Sector Employment, Q1 2014	11 June 2014	09:31:03
11	Labour Market Statistics, June 2014	11 June 2014	09:31:18
12	Regional Labour Market Statistics, July 2014	16 July 2014	09:31:37
13	Regional Labour Market Statistics, August 2014	13 Aug 2014	09:32:14
14	Producer Price Index, July 2014	19 Aug 2014	09:31:01
15	Producer Price Index, August 2014	16 Sept 2014	09:31:40
16	Regional Labour Market Statistics, September 2014	17 Sept 2014	09:31:40
17	Public Sector Employment, Q2 2014	17 Sept 2014	09:32:12

Nature of breach (including links with previous breaches, if any)

Releases not published at 09:30 on the ONS website.

Reasons for breach

There are a number of factors that have contributed to the breaches listed in this report.

The timeliness of any market sensitive publication is not only impacted by the number of other releases scheduled for the same day (which may differ from when the market sensitive release was last published) but there are several other factors that have also impacted timely publishing:

- The volume of content and shape of content that is published. Each release is made up of x number of items of differing sizes, complexity etc. Tables and datasets are particularly large and can impact publishing within 59 secs of 9:30 am - as we have found with the Labour Market Statistics and Regional Labour Market Statistics releases where there can be 130+ items including 50+ tables and datasets, resulting in the second release being delayed.

- Publishing data in an orderly and timely manner can also result in several market sensitive releases (with all their associated items) being scheduled for release on the same day, creating a queue at 9:30. The large Labour Market Statistics release is usually published ahead of the Regional Labour Market Statistics release and, on the same dates in January, March, June and September, other releases were also held up in the same queue. Similarly in August and September, the Producer Price Index release was published behind Consumer Price Inflation.

- Publication times may also be impacted by front-end website load. That is, a popular release can generate greater interest and, as users keep clicking URLs, the system resource usage can be increased which can leave less system resources available for publishing.

3. Reactions and impact (both within the producer body and outside)

The delay in publishing the GDP statistics attracted several 'tweets' on 28 January but ONS did not receive any other customer complaints or comments about the delays, either directly to the team responsible for the release, the Customer Contact Centre, Media Relations Team, or via social media.

4. Corrective actions taken to prevent reoccurrence of such a breach (include short-term actions, and long-term changes made to procedures)

It has been decided to make no further technical improvements to the ONS website in light of the possibility that these would destabilise the platform. The repetitive, technical breaches included in this report have reached a plateau. We will continue to report any change in the situation.

5. Links to published statements about this breach

None

6. Any other relevant supporting material

None