

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')

Progressions from Pathways to Apprenticeships Programmes, Statistical Article

Name of Producer Organisation

Welsh Government (WG)

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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2. Circumstances of breach

Relevant Principle/Protocol and Practice

Protocol 2, Release Practice 7.

Subject to compliance with the rules and principles on pre-release access set out in legislation¹, limit access before public release to those people essential for production and publication, and for quality assurance and operational purposes. Publish records of those who have access prior to release.

¹ The Pre-release Access to Official Statistics (Wales) Order 2009 sets out the rules and principles relating to the granting of pre-release access to wholly Welsh devolved statistics.

Date of occurrence

21 August 2013

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

A Welsh Government policy official (named in the pre-release access list) forwarded on the Statistical Article to three other members of their team, none of whom had been named in the pre-release access list.

Reasons for breach

The policy official who forwarded the Statistical Article believed the statistics had already been published, having not noted the date of the release.

This occurred despite the original pre-release email clearly stating that these were pre-release statistics that should not be shared, and the email containing a further warning asking recipients to ensure they were authorised for pre-release access before opening any attachments.

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

The subject statistician was alerted to the breach by one of the recipients on the afternoon in which the breach occurred. The breach was contained within the one policy team - we have been assured that the publication was not shared more widely.

The official responsible for the breach has apologised for the mistake and has assured the Chief Statistician that it will not happen again.

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

Short term

- The Chief Statistician and Head of Statistical Policy were informed as soon as the breach was discovered.
- The extent of the breach was quickly ascertained and it was ensured that those who had received the publication in error had deleted their copies and knew not to disseminate findings any further.
- The protocols surrounding pre-release access were explained to the policy official responsible for the breach, to ensure the issue will not reoccur.

Medium term

The Chief Statistician has drafted a note reminding officials about the rules surrounding pre-release access to official statistics, emphasising the importance of complying with them. The note has been sent to DGs to cascade to officials within their departments.

We are currently developing and trialling a new system to minimise the risk of breaches to pre-release protocol, whereby pre-release publications will be stored in restricted files on our electronic record management system, with access to the files limited to those on the pre-release access list.

5. Links to published statements about this breach

A link to the breach report (once published) will be put on the website.