

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')

Cycling and Walking to/ from work in NI 2014/15
<https://www.drdni.gov.uk/articles/walking-and-cycling-0>

Name of Producer Organisation

Department for Regional Development

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

Nicola Fisher, Central Statistics and Research Branch, Department for Regional Development, 10-18 Clarence Court, Adelaide Street, Belfast, BT2 8GB
25 November 2015

2. Circumstances of breach

Relevant Principle/Protocol and Practice

Protocol 2, Practice 8: Release Practices:

"Ensure that no indication of the substance of a statistical report is made public, or given to the media or any other party not recorded as eligible for access before publication. Report to the National Statistician immediately any accidental or wrongful release, and investigate the circumstances."

Date of occurrence

25 November 2015

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

A member of Private Office was acknowledging receipt of the Pre- release access e-mail and in doing so, forwarded the initial email from Karen Moore (DRD) with the Ministerial Sub, Press release and copy of the statistical report to a different Karen Moore (an economist in DFP).

Reasons for breach

There are two people named Karen Moore on the Microsoft Outlook address list. The Private Office official choose the wrong Karen Moore from this list.

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

There is no evidence of any leaks as the person who received this in error contacted the DP statistician in my office and deleted it from their system without opening it when they saw the 'Official- Sensitive' marking. The Private Office has apologised for this mistake and assured us that the same mistake would not be made again.

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

The breach was discovered very quickly and the Departmental Senior Statistician immediately phoned Private Office regarding this.

They had realised the mistake as soon as they had sent the e-mail. It was explained to the Private Office that this breach would have to be reported and that they must ensure in future that pre- release access acknowledgements are sent to the correct NISRA member of staff and that they should check the 'properties' of the person in Outlook. They were also advised that they should use "reply" rather than "forward" when acknowledging receipt of PRA material.

The Private Office has apologised for this mistake and assured us that procedures will be revisited to help prevent a re-occurrence.

The Senior Statistician immediately informed the Chief Executive at NISRA.

5. Links to published statements about this breach

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/announcements/cycling-and-walking-to-from-work-in-northern-ireland-201415>

<https://www.drdni.gov.uk/articles/walking-and-cycling-0>

6. Any other relevant supporting material

N/A