

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')

DCMS monthly museums and gallery visitor statistics for September 2015.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/museums-and-galleries-monthly-visits>

Name of Producer Organisation

Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS)

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 practices - Statistical reports should be released into the public domain in an orderly manner that promotes public confidence and gives equal access to all, subject to relevant legislation

Practice 7: Subject to compliance with the rules and principles on pre-release access set out in legislation, 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.

Date of occurrence

4 November 2015

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

Statistics were shared with individuals who were not on the pre-release access list on the day of pre-release. A press officer within DCMS, who had pre-release access, shared the statistics with two other members of the DCMS News and Communications team during the pre-release period.

Reasons for breach

Instructions to not discuss or share the statistics with anyone who is not on the pre-release access list were not followed. The statistics were shared with other members of the News and Communications team due to the media interest in the figures and a desire for sign off from the head of communications.

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

The impact of the breach was minimal. It was not shared with any additional individuals outside the DCMS news and communications team.

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

In the first instance the importance of compliance with the Code of Practice and pre-release access has been reiterated, including the consequences of a breach and rationale for the code.

An email has been sent to all individuals in DCMS with pre-release access to remind them of the requirements and what that means for individuals.

5. Links to published statements about this breach

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