

Following the submission of this breach report, Ed Humpherson (Director General for Regulation) wrote to the National Statistician, John Pullinger, on 5 April 2017 granting a retrospective exemption to all those producers listed in the Annex. See <https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/correspondence/code-of-practice-breaches/>

REPORTING A BREACH OF THE CODE OF PRACTICE FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS

1. Core Information

Title and link to statistical outputs	Various – see Annex 1 below
Name of statistical producers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) • Department for Transport (DfT) • HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) • Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) • Public Health England (PHE) • Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) • Department for Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs (Defra) • Office of Rail and Road (ORR)
Name and contact details of person dealing with report	GSS Good Practice Team
Link to published statement about the breach (if relevant)	
Date of report	31 March 2017

2. Circumstances of breach

Relevant principle/protocol and practice	Protocol 2, Practice 4: 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 of breach	23 March 2017
Following the terrorist attack at Westminster Bridge in London on 22 March 2017, Heads of Profession received instructions <i>via</i> their departmental communications teams that no publications should be made from GOV.UK for a 24 hour period. This also extended to pre-announced statistics.	

3. Impact of the breach

This caused disruption and delay to the publication of 16 statistical releases from 8 government departments. The Government Statistical Service (GSS) enacted business continuity procedures and although there were publishing delays of up to 1 hour 47 minutes, 'business as usual' soon resumed, minimising the overall impact to users.

4. Corrective actions (taken or planned) to prevent re-occurrence

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At 16:41 the National Statistician and the Director General for Regulation were made aware of an issue via an email from a Head of Profession. • Following discussion with the National Statistician, at 17:12 the National Statistician's Private Office informed the ONS Head of Digital Publishing of the situation, asking whether it would be feasible to place GSS statistics onto the ONS backup site. • At 18:23 the Central Policy Secretariat emailed Heads of Profession to alert them to the issue. <p>At 19:41 the National Statistician's Private Secretary emailed Heads of Profession to say that, after careful consideration, the National Statistician had decided that it was important</p>

that all statistics which were pre-announced should be published. This email included instructions for how Heads of Profession could provide their statistical releases on the ONS web publishing team for publication on the ONS backup website.

- The ONS publishing team experienced some unexpected technical issues with their back-up web site on the morning of 23 March 2017 but despite this they were still able to publish all the statistics received from other government departments between 09:34 and 11:17 that morning, minimising the impact on users.
- ONS provided a URL for each publication, for departments to share directly with their stakeholders and users.

Annex 1 – Table of delayed statistical publications on 23 March 2017

Producer	Title and link to statistical output	Publishing Platform	Time of release	Adverse user impact and additional comments
BEIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renewable Heat Statistics: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/renewable-heat-incentive-statistics • Household Energy Efficiency National Statistics: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/household-energy-efficiency-national-statistics-headline-release-march-2017 • Annual Household Energy Efficiency National Statistics, Detailed Report 2016: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/household-energy-efficiency-national-statistics-detailed-report-2016 	<p>ONS back-up website</p> <p>GOV.UK</p>	<p>09:35</p> <p>16:00</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Received clearance to publish on GOV.UK just after 3.30pm. • No evidence of any serious detriment to users – the ONS backup website URL was supplied to those people who queried where the releases were.
DfT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road conditions in England, 2016: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/road-conditions-in-england-2016 	<p>ONS back-up website</p> <p>GOV.UK</p>	<p>09:50</p> <p>12:45</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents for publication were delivered to ONS around 09:15. • DfT's press team were contacted by one user asking where the statistics were – they were not able to search for, or find them on the ONS backup website. A direct URL link was provided.
HMRC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child and Working Tax Credits finalised award statistics (small area data) 2013 to 2014: https://www.gov.uk/government 	ONS back-up website	11:13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All known users were informed of where they could access the statistics.

	<p>ent/statistics/personal-tax-credits-finalised-award-statistics-small-area-data-isoa-and-data-zone-2013-to-2014</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child and Working Tax Credits finalised award statistics (small area data 2014 to 2015): https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/personal-tax-credits-finalised-award-statistics-small-area-data-isoa-and-data-zone-2014-to-2015 • Child benefit statistics Aug 16 (small area data): https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/child-benefit-small-area-statistics-august-2016 • Child Benefit statistics Aug 16 geographical analysis:https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/child-benefit-statistics-geographical-analysis-august-2016 	ONS back-up website	12:40	
		ONS back-up website	10:30	
		ONS back-up website	09:58	
DCLG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Applications, Q4 2016 (National Statistic) https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/planning-applications-in-england-october-to-december-2016 • Statutory Homelessness and Homelessness Prevention and Relief, Q4 2016 (National Statistic) https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statutory-homelessness-and-homelessness-prevention-and-relief-england-october-to-december-2016 	ONS back-up website	11:17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DCLG experienced IT problems of its own on 23 March, which further complicated the publication situation. • Two enquirers phoned at 12.45 and 13.45 to enquire about the whereabouts of the release. DCLG are not aware of any other instances of user inconvenience. • Key users were informed as to where they could access the releases.
		GOV.UK	14:25	
		ONS back-up website	10:00	
		GOV.UK	14:21	
PHE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National norovirus and rotavirus weekly report: data up to 19 March 2017 https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/602064/Norovirus_update_2017_week_10.pdf • Weekly Flu and Weekly Mortality surveillance 	ONS back-up website	09:50	
		ONS back-up website	14:07	

	<p>reports - scheduled for 2pm publication</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/602927/Weekly_national_influenza_report_week_12_2017.pdf</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/602929/PHE_influenza_surveillance_graphs_16_17_week_12_2017.pdf</p>			
DWP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work Programme statistical summary: data to December 2016 (National Statistic) https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/work-programme-statistical-summary-data-to-december-2016 	ONS back-up website	09:51	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emails were sent out to internal and external stakeholders and users before the scheduled publication time, to alert them to the alternative arrangements. • No one commented about the delay.
Defra	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • United Kingdom poultry and poultry meat statistics: February 2017 (National Statistic) https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/announcements/united-kingdom-poultry-and-poultry-meat-statistics-february-2017 	ONS back-up website	09:34	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Just before 09:30 we inserted the ONS URL into the existing statistics announcement so users would know where to find the statistical release. • The URL was provided to press office after 09:30. • The statistics were published on GOV.UK later that afternoon.
ORR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 Oct 2016-07 Jan 2017(Periods 8-10) Disabled Person's Railcard and assisted journeys data – tables only (Official Statistics) http://dataportal.orr.gov.uk/browsersreports/18 	ORR data portal website	09:54	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflicting information received on the evening of 22 March and morning of 23 March, on whether to publish the statistics, resulted in the delay to publication on the ORR data portal. • It took additional time to process and update the live connections to the ORR data warehouse.