

REPORTING A BREACH OF THE CODE OF PRACTICE FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS

1. Core Information [\[guidance\]](#)

Title and link to statistical output	Phonics screening check and key stage 1 assessments: England 2017 https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/phonics-screening-check-and-key-stage-1-assessments-england-2017
Name of statistical producer	Primary attainment team - Gemma Coleman 0207 783 8239
Name and contact details of person dealing with report	Mike Jones – Deputy HoP – 0783 348 4201
Link to published statement about the breach (if relevant)	n/a
Date of report	28 September 2017

2. Circumstances of breach [\[guidance\]](#)

Relevant principle/protocol and practice	Protocol 2, principle 7
Date of occurrence of breach	27 September 2017
<p><i>An opinion editorial (op-ed) piece, with blanks where figures were to be inserted, was prepared by communications colleagues ahead of the SFR pre-release access (PRA) day.</i></p> <p><i>On PRA day, a member of private office who had PRA, dropped figures from the embargoed statistics into the draft op-ed piece. This article was then embedded in an email and sent to people on the PRA list. This email contained text to say that there were numbers from the embargoed statistics within the document, but did not contain the same warning text as the original email sent by the production team.</i></p> <p><i>A policy G6, who was in the PRA group then forwarded the op-ed to 5 colleagues who were not on the PRA list on 27 September 2017 at 9.56am. The production team were not copied in at this point, but were further down the chain at 12.45pm. The SEO who led on the data production then forwarded the op-ed to a colleague (SEO) in the same division who was not on the PRA list at 1.09pm to clear published statistics also contained in the document. An adviser also sent the op-ed at 5.13pm to a colleague (a G7) not on the PRA list who reported the three breaches to the HoP for statistics.</i></p>	

3. Impact of the breach [\[guidance\]](#)

<p><i>Seven people not on the pre-release access list had access to some of the headline results. These individuals have been contacted and have confirmed the email and op-ed were not sent on further,</i></p> <p><i>No statistics were released in advance of publication.</i></p>

4. Corrective actions (taken or planned) to prevent re-occurrence [\[guidance\]](#)

<p><i>The individuals involved have been contacted and reminded of their responsibilities regarding pre-release access. The PRA list is being reviewed as part of the programme of work to tighten up statistics controls.</i></p> <p><i>HoP is working with Comms colleagues and others to review current process and this will</i></p>
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include a clear requirement for the same “health warning” words used by production teams to be included in any further correspondence during the PRA period. This wording itself has been changed to make it clear that figures must not be lifted into non-protected emails during the PRA period. This has been communicated to all statisticians in DfE. A programme of work with comms, policy and private office colleagues is underway to raise awareness and strengthen statistics controls more generally.