

## REPORTING A BREACH OF THE CODE OF PRACTICE FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS

### 1. Core Information

<b>Title and link to statistical output</b>	Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service workforce quarterly: September 2017 – Official Statistics  <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/her-majestys-prison-and-probation-service-workforce-quarterly-september-2017">https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/her-majestys-prison-and-probation-service-workforce-quarterly-september-2017</a>
<b>Name of statistical producer</b>	<b>Ministry of Justice</b>
<b>Name and contact details of person dealing with report</b>	<b>Steve Ellerd-Elliott</b> Chief Statistician and Deputy Director Justice Statistics Analytical Services Mobile: 07973 725841 <a href="mailto:statistics.enquiries@justice.qsi.gov.uk">statistics.enquiries@justice.qsi.gov.uk</a>
<b>Link to published statement about the breach (if relevant)</b>	<b>Not applicable</b>
<b>Date of report</b>	<b>20/12/2017</b>

### 2. Circumstances of breach

<b>Relevant principle/protocol and practice</b>	<b>Accidental or wrongful early release</b>  <b>Principle 2:</b> Impartiality and objectivity, <b>Practice 1:</b> Publish statistical reports in an orderly manner, in accordance with Protocol 2.  And within <b>Protocol 2, Practice 8:</b> Ensure that no indication of the substances of a statistical report is made public, or given to the media or any other party not recorded as eligible for access before publication.
<b>Date of occurrence of breach</b>	<b>30/11/2017</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The breach relates to local management information being used in response to a parliamentary question (PQ) instead of using data from the related Official Statistics release.</li> <li>• The management information presented in the PQ was for the position as at 24<sup>th</sup> November 2017 whilst the Official Statistics, which were published on the 16<sup>th</sup> November 2017, covered the period to 30 September 2017.</li> <li>• The information provided in the parliamentary question response will form part of the Official Statistics which are scheduled to be published on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2018 and cover the period to 31 December 2017.</li> <li>• The Parliamentary Question was answered on 30 November 2017. The early release of this information was identified by an internal team on 13 December 2017.</li> <li>• Both parliamentary branch and the Secretary of State were notified immediately to begin the process to amend the answer.</li> <li>• An internal review identified that this PQ did not go through the full clearance process: the draft PQ was submitted to Parliamentary Branch as cleared by the relevant Deputy</li> </ul>	

Director, however, the PQ had not been routed through press office as is standard on every PQ, and the draft did not reflect conversations which had taken place with analytical services.

- If the PQ had gone through the full clearance process this accidental early release would have been prevented.
- On 19/12/17 the answer on Hansard was revised to reflect the position consistent with the latest published Official Statistics.

### **3. Impact of the breach**

*Provide details of the impact of the breach both inside the producer body and externally*

We are not aware of any actions taken in response to this parliamentary question and the view is that the potential impact of the breach has been contained.

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

*Describe the short-term actions made to redress the situation and the longer-term changes to procedures etc*

The immediate action was to revise the information as quickly as possible. This was completed in four working days after confirming the breach.

The Ministry of Justice Parliamentary Branch have reviewed the existing process and have agreed there is a need to tighten up on checks that the process is being followed fully, which they are implementing.

There is also a need to make sure people are aware of the correct process to follow and the newly launched Statistical Licence to Operate initiative within the Ministry of Justice should help with this. This has been developed to strengthen our understanding and ensure our statistics remain high quality and are used responsibly.

The Statistical Licence to Operate consists of three parts: Introduction to Statistics; Delivering statistics for the Ministry of Justice; and Engaging in the statistical process. This has been designed to provide a shared understanding as well as an opportunity to reflect on how we work together, how we can improve the way we deliver data and statistics and the support that is available.

There are specific sections on the different uses of management information and statistics with the key message that only published statistics should be used in the public domain. There is a further section on the appropriate use of statistics within PQs and FOIs.

This initiative has the full support of our Permanent Secretary and the Executive Committee and is a prerequisite for all those involved with Official Statistics; from producers of statistics to lead officials and all individuals on the pre-release list including Ministers and the Senior Leadership Group.