

Introducing the *Code of Practice for Statistics*

Official statistics are an essential public asset. They provide a window on society, the economy and on the work and performance of government. They are fundamental to the judgements and decisions made by the public, by government and by an enormous range of other organisations.

The *Code of Practice for Statistics* plays an essential role in ensuring that statistics published by government inspire public confidence through demonstrating trustworthiness, and providing high-quality statistics that enhance public value.

Official statistics need to be more than just a series of numbers, because statistics have value when they serve public debate. This refreshed Code embeds a more ambitious notion of the purpose and value of official statistics. It is a shift from thinking of statistics as a static output to recognising that they provide a dynamic public service.

This Code provides producers of official statistics with the detailed practices they must commit to when producing and releasing official statistics. It provides all producers of statistics with a framework that can be applied in a proportionate and flexible way to improve public confidence.

The Code is a tool to guide behaviour and not a prescriptive list of requirements. We have structured the practices under three pillars so that their purpose is clear.

Trustworthiness – Confidence in the people and organisations that produce statistics and data

An organisation must provide testable evidence to demonstrate that they have the interests of the public at heart, by demonstrating competence, honesty and openness. The practices under the Trustworthiness pillar set out the key commitments that must be made to support independent statistics production.

Quality – Data and methods that produce assured statistics

The statistics must be the best available estimate of what they aim to measure, and should not mislead. To achieve this the data must be relevant, the methods must be sound and the assurance around the outputs must be clear.

Value – Statistics that support society's needs for information

Statistics must provide for the public. This includes a coherent picture, a focus on users, an emphasis on what questions the statistics answer and a focus on innovation as the world changes.

These pillars are conceptually distinct. But they support each other. A producer of official statistics is more likely to be perceived as trustworthy where the data they provide are clearly of high quality. High-quality statistics are much more likely to provide useful answers to key questions than lower-quality statistics.

The Code's pillars and principles resonate widely with people. They are universal and can apply to any situation where an organisation wants to publish data, evidence and statistics that inspire confidence. So we are encouraging the wider application of its principles beyond official statistics within government, as well as for organisations outside government that provide statistical information to the public.

Our website presents an interactive version of the Code with case studies and links to relevant good practice guidance. It provides tools to support use of the Code, including a mapping with the 2009 edition of the Code of Practice, and guidance for anyone needing to understand the requirements of the Code for their use of data and statistics.

<https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/code-of-practice/>