

Comparing the Code of Practice for Statistics (Edition 2.0) with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics (Edition 1.0)

Key changes

The refreshed Code builds on the good practice from the first edition by using a framework that can be applied in a proportionate and flexible way to improve public confidence:

Trustworthiness: confidence in the people and organisations that produce statistics and data

Quality: data and methods that produce assured statistics

Value: statistics that support society's needs for information

The refreshed Code embeds a more ambitious notion of the purpose and value of official statistics. It reflects a shift away from thinking of statistics as a static output to recognising that they provide a dynamic public service.

Four practices from the first edition of the Code have been removed. They are a reference to the Publication Hub (Protocol 2.3), a practice referring to Protocol 3 (Principle 7.7) and two requiring a Statement of Administrative Sources (Protocol 3.5, and Protocol 3.5a). None of these practices are now relevant.

Code 1.0 practices have otherwise been incorporated and extended into 14 principles:

Trustworthiness: T1 Honesty and integrity; T2 Independent decision making; T3 Orderly release; T4 Transparent processes and management; T5 Professional capability; T6 Data governance

Quality: Q1 Suitable data sources; Q2 Sound methods; Q3 Assured quality

Value: V1 Relevance to users; V2 Accessibility; V3 Clarity and insight; V4 Innovation and improvement; V5 Efficiency and proportionality

Transparency, collaboration and coherence are cross-cutting themes, essential aspects of statistical practice that arise in each of the three pillars.

The Code is now available through an interactive website, as well as in hardcopy and PDF form. Guidance is integrated in the interactive Code, providing straightforward ways of accessing GSS good practice examples, plus further explanations about the Code.

A mapping tool has been prepared to help users of the Code to bridge between the two editions of the Code of Practice, as well as with the ESS quality assurance framework and UN Fundamental Principles.

Scope

The Code provides producers of official statistics with the detailed practices they must commit to when producing and releasing official statistics. As such, the Code continues to apply to all official statistics, including those designated as National Statistics and those labelled as experimental statistics.

National Statistics are those official statistics that have been designated by the Authority as fully complying with the Code. They must continue to meet the Code in full.

The proportionate nature of the refreshed Code is an essential feature – the application of the Code within the organisation is under the guidance of the Head of Profession for Statistics. The extent of effort to meet the practices for those official statistics not designated as National Statistics is at the discretion of the Head of Profession.

Exemptions to a specific practice can be requested where the practice cannot be implemented – examples have been an inability to release at 9.30am, and potential harm to analysts if named in a statistical bulletin. This practice applies the same standard as under Code 1.0.

New developments

Trustworthiness: 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.

The Code strengthens the role of the Heads of Profession, clarifying their importance in the governance and management of official statistics, as well as advocating the pillars to others. The Code includes a new principle focused on data governance.

Please note that the Code continues to reflect the orderly release arrangements that comply with the pre-release access legislation.

Quality: The Code has expanded the areas of practice regarding quality, incorporating much of the underlying thinking from the UK Statistics Authority's *Quality Assurance of Administrative Data*. 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: The Code has greater prominence on delivering valuable statistics. 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.

It promotes a commitment to public engagement and emphasises the need to develop an ongoing dialogue with users and stakeholders.

The Code reminds producers of the need to review, and possibly change or stop, their production of statistics. It also emphasises the importance of incorporating new data sources, methods, and ways of disseminating data and statistics.

Voluntary application of the Code

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. The extent to which the Code is applied is voluntary.

A draft guide about voluntarily applying the Code is being shared for comment with the release of Code 2.0. The guide is expected to be finalised and released during April 2018.