

REPORT OF A BREACH OF THE CODE OF PRACTICE FOR STATISTICS

1. Core Information

Title and link to statistical output	UK Economic accounts https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/nationalaccounts/uksectoraccounts/datasets/ukeconomicaccounts
Name of producer organisation	Office for National Statistics
Name and contact details of person dealing with report	Pete Lee Pete.lee@ons.gov.uk +44 (0) 1633 456713
Link to published statement about the breach (if relevant)	
Date of breach report	23/05/18

2. Circumstances of breach

Relevant pillars, principles and practices	T3 Orderly release
Date of occurrence of breach	22/05/18
<p>In response to an email query from a PhD student at Lisbon University, a member of ONS national accounts staff inadvertently supplied a 2018Q1 figure for one series (external short-term debt securities liabilities, balance sheet), a month before the scheduled publication date (29 June 2018).</p> <p>This information is released by ONS as part of the UK Economic Accounts, table B20. The series is supplied by the Bank of England to ONS for incorporation in the publication.</p> <p>This breach was due to an oversight. The figure was taken from a non-public area of an internal database by mistake, rather than the public area or the website itself. Further training and reminders have been provided to prevent this from recurring.</p>	

3. Impact of the breach

The series is very low-profile and not market-sensitive, so the impact is expected to be extremely minor. The Bank of England have been informed.

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

<p>An attempt was made to recall the email but this was unsuccessful. The ONS contacted the PhD student who provided assurance that they would not use the 2018 Q1 figure, as they were only interested in data up to the end of 2015.</p> <p>An investigation is being carried out to ascertain why established procedures had not been followed. The findings of this investigation will be documented and shared with ONS colleagues in order to prevent a recurrence. In the meantime, the existing procedures have been reiterated and reinforced, with a view to preventing any repeat.</p> <p>An official statement has not been issued, given the minor nature of the breach. In addition, the ONS will continue working with the Bank of England, who owns the data, on improving our processes and ensuring compliance with the Code.</p>
