

REPORT OF A BREACH OF THE CODE OF PRACTICE FOR STATISTICS

1. Core Information

Title and link to statistical output	Table 2: C. difficile infection counts by NHS acute trust and month (from June 2017 to June 2018) C. difficile infection: monthly data by NHS acute trust and onset
Name of producer organisation	Public Health England
Name and contact details of person dealing with report	Kate Sweeney Head of Profession for Official Statistics Public Health England Health Improvement Directorate Suite 3b, Cunard Building Water Street Liverpool, L3 1DS Email: kate.sweeney@phe.gov.uk Tel: 0151 7066202
Link to published statement about the breach (if relevant)	Not applicable
Date of breach report	07/08/2018

2. Circumstances of breach

Relevant principle(s) and practice(s)	Trustworthiness pillar: T3: Orderly release T3.6: Statistics should be released to all users at 9.30am on a weekday.
Date of occurrence of breach	01/08/2018
<i>Give an account of what happened including roles of persons involved, dates, times etc</i>	
<p>On 30 July 2018, the 14 webpages with the .ods spreadsheets forming the monthly healthcare associated infection (HCAI) counts National Statistics release were produced for publication on GOV.UK by the Information Officer in the HCAI and AMR (Antimicrobial Resistance) Team. The Information Officer submitted the pages to the Digital Content Team for the usual 'second pair of eyes' check and scheduled publication at 9.30am on 1 August 2018.</p> <p>On the morning of 1 August, the Information Officer was presenting in a meeting and wasn't able to check publication of the pages at 9.30am as usual. The Information Officer had delegated this checking onto the Information Assistant. The Information Assistant noticed that one of the 14 pages had not been published at 9.30am. Once the Information Officer was notified of the missing page, she contacted the digital team via the Jira system as well as via skype and asked for the page to be checked and published urgently. The page was published at 10.33am.</p>	

3. Impact of the breach

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

There was minimal impact to PHE but it did cause concern to those involved. The oversight was discovered and corrected as soon as possible. We did not receive any external communication about the delay.

The release had been pre-announced on the gov.uk release calendar, so a user would have been aware that part of the release was missing and could have requested urgent access using an email address on the previous release.

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

As soon as the Information Officer was notified of the delay, she immediately contacted the Digital Content Team to report the problem. A member of the Digital Content Team investigated and found that the 'C. difficile infection: monthly data by NHS acute trust and onset' page had accidentally been overlooked and was still in 'submitted' stage. They immediately checked and published the page, which was at 10.33am.

An automatic help desk system for publishing requests has recently been introduced. To help identify the pages to be checked and published, the request form has a specific box to copy in the Whitehall publisher link. However, for publishing requests for multiple pages the links need to be copied into the main request box. It was the link that was separate from the others that was accidentally overlooked.

This hasn't occurred before, the Digital Content Team receives a lot of publishing requests and the new system generally seems to work very well. Automatic emails are sent to show that requests are in progress and have been completed. This occurrence has acted as a reminder of the need to systematically include a check that all official statistics have been scheduled for publication on the pre-announced release date, at 9.30am.