

## BREACH OF THE CODE OF PRACTICE FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS

This document reports a breach of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, or the relevant Pre-release Access to Official Statistics Orders, to which the Code applies as if it included these orders.

All breach reports are published on the UK Statistics Authority's website and need to explain (clearly and concisely) what happened to cause the breach and what is being/has been done by the statistical Head of Profession (HoP) to ensure the risk of recurrence is minimised.

### 1. Background information

Name of Statistical Output (including weblink to the relevant output or 'landing page')

Producer Price Inflation, December 2017  
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/releases/producerpriceinflation>

Name of Producer Organisation

Office for National Statistics (ONS)

Name and contact details of the statistical Head of Profession (Lead Official in an Arm's Length Body) submitting this report, and date of report

Glenn Everett, Director General, Office for National Statistics,  
Government Buildings, Cardiff Road, Newport, NP10 8XG.  
Date: 12/01/2018

### 2. Circumstances of breach

Relevant Principle/Protocol and Practice

Protocol 2: Release practices, Practice 7 – Subject to compliance with the rules and principles on pre-release access set out in legislation, limit access before public release to those people essential for production and publication, and for quality assurance and operational purposes.

Date of occurrence

12/01/2018

Nature of breach (including links with previous breaches, if any)

An unpublished file for the release was added to Slack, an un-secure third-party messaging system, for investigation, as the file was not displaying correctly on the preview site.

Reasons for breach

This breach was as a result of human error.

An unpublished data table was displaying incorrectly on the ONS preview site. To try and fix the issue a member of the web development team asked that the file was sent across to them for investigation.

The file was added to an un-secure Slack channel by a member of the Publishing Team by mistake. The file was on Slack for no longer than 2 minutes, where it was potentially visible to around 30 ONS staff, ahead of its official publication time.

A member of the publishing team soon spotted the mistake and the file was deleted straight away.

Timeline:

13:21 PM: Issue raised by Publishing Team regarding problem loading table onto website

14:08 PM: Developer acknowledges issue and asks for file to resolve the issue

14:10 PM: File uploaded to Slack

14:10 PM: Question asked over publishing status of file (to check if pre-release access had been breached)

14:11 PM: Mistake acknowledged and file removed from Slack and deleted from local machines

### **3. Reactions and impact (both within the producer body and outside)**

None

### **4. Corrective actions taken to prevent reoccurrence of such a breach (include short-term actions, and long-term changes made to procedures)**

The Publishing Team and Development teams have both been reminded of their obligations under the Code of Practice for Statistics and the importance of using the correct, secure processes when sharing files for quality assurance purposes ahead of publication.

### **5. Links to published statements about this breach**

None

### **6. Any other relevant supporting material**

None