

REPORT OF A BREACH OF THE CODE OF PRACTICE FOR STATISTICS

1. Core Information

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| Title and link to statistical output | Prescribing Costs in Hospitals and the Community 2017 – 2018 https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/prescribing-costs-in-hospitals-and-the-community/2017-18 |
| Name of producer organisation | NHS Digital |
| Name and contact details of person dealing with report | Adam Little Adam.little@nhs.net |
| Link to published statement about the breach (if relevant) | |
| Date of breach report | 21.11.2018 |

2. Circumstances of breach

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| Relevant principle(s) and practice(s) | Trustworthiness/T3.4 Orderly release The circulation of statistics in their final form ahead of their publication should be restricted to eligible recipients, in line with the rules and principles on pre-release access set out in legislation for the UK and devolved administrations. The details of those granted access should be recorded, together with clear justifications for access. No indication of the statistics should be made public and the statistics should not be given to any other party without prior permission for access. The list of recipients should be reviewed regularly and kept to a minimum. |
| Date of occurrence of breach | 14.11.2018 |
| <p>During the pre-release access period for the publication, a colleague in NHS England with pre-release access to the publication files contacted a policy lead in NHS Improvement to discuss the figures, assuming they would have pre-release access, as in the past NHS Improvement have had pre-release access approved, but had not requested it for this release. All parties who are sent pre-release access material can see the lists of all people from all approved lists with pre-release access so are aware of who should and should not be contacted.</p> <p>We were alerted to the breach when the production team were sent queries raised by NHS England based on discussions with NHS Improvement. The person in NHS Improvement only discussed the figures with colleagues on the NHS England pre-release access list.</p> | |

3. Impact of the breach

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| There is no external impact regarding this breach, however internally this has raised concerns over the understanding of the limitations around pre-release access in other organisations. |
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4. Corrective actions (taken or planned) to prevent re-occurrence

Short term: NHS Digital have let NHS England know of their breach of the Code of Practice for Statistics and that a breach report will be raised. The NHS England Head of Profession for Statistics has reminded the teams in NHS England of the restrictions around early access to official statistics.

Longer term: NHS Digital will contact NHS Improvement and ask that they request pre-release access in future, or that NHS England ask on their behalf and keep a record of their need to be included in pre-release for this publication series. Colleagues in NHS England will be asked to assure NHS Digital that no information covered by pre-release will be shared outside of those included in the approved lists in future.