

REPORT OF A BREACH OF THE CODE OF PRACTICE FOR STATISTICS

1. Core Information [\[guidance\]](#)

Title and link to statistical output	Eye Care Measures. https://gov.wales/eye-care-measures-nhs-outpatients
Name of producer organisation	Welsh Government
Name and contact details of person dealing with report	John Morris, morris.john@gov.wales
Link to published statement about the breach (if relevant)	n/a
Date of breach report	23/5/2019

2. Circumstances of breach [\[guidance\]](#)

Relevant principle(s) and practice(s)	Practice T3.3, T3.4 - content of a statistical report has been shared before publication with someone not on the relevant pre-release access list.
Date of occurrence of breach	21/5/19
<p>The Welsh Government has been working with NHS Wales health boards to develop a new eye care measure. This measure has been in development since 2017 and were published as official statistics for the first time on 11th June 2019.</p> <p>An Eye Care Steering Group was established to oversee this work. The group consists of health boards (clinicians, informatics, etc), Welsh Government Policy officials, information standards in the NHS Wales Informatics Service and the RNIB. The group has been monitoring the data to ensure quality and consistency and ensuring that the data are fit for purpose.</p> <p>The routine papers were produced for the meeting on 21st May 2019 and set via email to the group who were helping to scrutinise and deal with quality and definitional issues whilst the measures were in development. The board had ophthalmology clinicians on it and leads from all the health boards so seeing the data was key to helping ensure consistency and quality. The policy lead included the April data as they had done for the previous 12 months plus - but of course the April data was due to be published as official stats for the first time. This meant that the data for April 2019 which were to be published for the first time as official statistics were included in the papers sent out on the 20th May.</p> <p>After the meeting there was a discussion about pre-release access which led the policy lead to realise that the data should not have been circulated. On 22nd May, they contacted the head of health, social care and population statistics (John Morris) to discuss and notify him of the breach. The head of health statistics advised that all members of the group should be contacted and reminded that the data are official statistics and should not be shared more widely. He also asked for assurances that the data had not been passed on.</p> <p>All the group members gave assurances that the data was not used externally until after publication.</p>	

3. Impact of the breach [\[guidance\]](#)

The data may be high profile due to the Ministerial focus that this new measure has. Assurances were received that no-one who received the data used the information prior to its publication.

4. Corrective actions (taken or planned) to prevent re-occurrence[\[guidance\]](#)

Describe the short-term actions made to redress the situation and the longer term changes to procedures etc

In the short-term, assurances were gained from all members of the group that they would not share the data with anyone outside the group and where they had those would not share it any further.

Longer term, the policy lead has agreed that the data will not be shared with the Eye Care Steering group in advance of its publication and the policy team who have access to the data have been made aware that it cannot be circulated.

The policy leads will get pre-release access, and this will follow the robust pre-release system in place which has been cited by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) as a good case study.

This was a one-off accidental incident related to the transition from the development stage to the publication of official statistics. As future releases will be more routine, and there is less involvement of officials in developing the measures, then the use of secure pre-release mechanisms will provide additional mitigation.