

# REPORT OF A BREACH OF THE CODE OF PRACTICE FOR STATISTICS

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

<b>Title and link to statistical output</b>	<b>Service Personnel Statistics,</b> <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/quarterly-service-personnel-statistics-2019">https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/quarterly-service-personnel-statistics-2019</a>
<b>Name of producer organisation</b>	<b>Ministry of Defence</b>
<b>Name and contact details of person dealing with report</b>	MOD Chief Analyst <a href="mailto:DefStrat-Stat-ChiefStatsOffice@mod.uk">DefStrat-Stat-ChiefStatsOffice@mod.uk</a>
<b>Link to published statement about the breach (if relevant)</b>	<a href="https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2019-07-08/debates/1A2D8280-44FB-434C-9994-24388A6ED3F2/OralAnswersToQuestions">https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2019-07-08/debates/1A2D8280-44FB-434C-9994-24388A6ED3F2/OralAnswersToQuestions</a>
<b>Date of breach report</b>	<b>05/08/2019</b>

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

<b>Relevant principle(s) and practice(s)</b>	<i><b>Practice T3.4</b> – Statistical content has been made public or supplied to parties not essential for statistical production without prior permission for access, through accidental or wrongful release.</i>
<b>Date of occurrence of breach</b>	<b>8 July 2019</b>
<p>On 8 July 2019, in response to an Oral Question at the House of Commons, Mark Lancaster, Minister of State for the Armed Forces, Ministry of Defence, quoted figures relating to strength of the British Army as at 1 May and 1 June 2019.</p> <p>The department publishes Service Personnel Statistics (National Statistics publication) quarterly, with figures provided for each quarter point, that is 1 January, 1 April, 1 July, 1 October, only. At the time of the Minister's response, the latest published statistics were relating to 1 April 2019. The figures used in the response were compiled from different sources, including a Management Information Report that is for internal use only. Therefore, unpublished figures, which could have been used as an indication of upcoming National and Official Statistics, were placed in the public domain.</p> <p>Furthermore, the methodology used to compile the figures was incorrect as the appropriate components were not included in the calculation. The Minister added up two figures, one was the total size of the Army and the other was the total number recruited to the <u>Armed Forces</u> in a given month. He added them together to demonstrate an increase in the size of the <u>Army only</u>. This was an error due to adding up the wrong column.</p>	

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

Release of this data outside the quarterly reports might allow others to erroneously infer future reported numbers from the intermediate months detail.

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

Relevant members of the Minister's private office have been made aware of the issue, which they have discussed with the Minister in detail. The Minister uses the detailed information to inform his thinking and as background for his answers at Defence Questions. The Minister fully understands and respects the statistics release process and will not use them before they are published in the future.

The Minister intends to correct the erroneous statistic at the next Defence Questions.