REPORT OF A BREACH OF THE CODE OF PRACTICE FOR STATISTICS

Government Statistical Service

1. Core Information [guidance]

Title and link to statistical output	Northern Ireland local authority collected municipal waste management statistics Webpages https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/northern-ireland-local-authority-collected-municipal-waste-management-statistics https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-local-authority-collected-municipal-waste-management-statistics-january-march-2019
Name of producer organisation	Statistics and Analytical Services Branch, Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)
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Link to published statement about the breach (if relevant)	https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-local-authority-collected-municipal-waste-management-statistics-january-march-2019
Date of breach report	22nd July 2019

2. Circumstances of breach [guidance]

Relevant principle(s) and practice(s)	*Practice T3.6 - statistics not released at the scheduled time of 09:30am (early or delayed publication)**
Date of occurrence of breach	19th July 2019

The Drupal content management system which supports the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) has a facility to schedule pages to go live at 9.30am on future dates. In preparation for publication release at 9.30am on Thursday 25th July a staff member prepared the publication and associated documents on 19th July and used Drupal scheduling tool to delay the release date until 9.30am on 25th July.

On 22nd July at 11am it was discovered that the publication webpage was live. A member of the website support staff who was unfamiliar with the scheduling facility inadvertently authorised the immediate release of the publication. As soon as the release was discovered it was removed from the website.

3. Impact of the breach [guidance]

The publication page was accessed a total of 21 times (tables downloaded 13 times, report 7 times and infographic once). Some of these were internal by the staff checking the availability of the report online (producers and IT website administrators). It is not possible to ascertain or confirm how many of the downloads were by other DAERA staff or external users.

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

On 22nd July at 11am it was discovered that the publication webpages were live.
The website team were contacted immediately and asked to remove the pages from the website. This was completed at 13.10 on 22nd July.

Following discussions with NISRA and GPT it was decided to publish the statistics as soon as possible to minimise the length of the breach.
The publication was released at 3:30 on 23rd July on the DAERA website.
The gov.uk website was updated to show the new release date which included the reason for the change.
Pre-release recipients including the DAERA Permanent Secretary were issued a note with link to the publication and advised that due to the breach there would not be an opportunity to provide pre-release access.
Stakeholders and users were also sent a note providing details of the breach and link to released statistics. DAERA press office distributed a press release about the latest results to their media contacts and also added the information to the DAERA homepage. An infographic highlighting the results was added to the DAERAstats twitter account.

The scheduling system on the Drupal document management system was implemented correctly but a member of the website support staff who was unfamiliar with the scheduling facility inadvertently authorised the immediate release of the publication. Members of the statistical branch met with the web support team to investigate the cause of the breach and review procedures to prevent re-occurrence. Following the meeting it was proposed to review all instructions and guidance held on publishing to the web. Extra staff members will be given enhanced permissions in web publishing so that the statistics producing branch will have more control of the release. Refresher desk training will be delivered to all those publishing statistics to the website.