

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



## 1. Core Information

Title and link to statistical output	<a href="#">Northern Ireland Youth Justice Agency Annual Workload Statistics 2018/2019</a>
Name of producer organisation	Youth Justice Agency, Department of Justice
Name and contact details of person dealing with report	Joan Ritchie <a href="mailto:Joan.Ritchie@justice-ni.x.gsi.gov.uk">Joan.Ritchie@justice-ni.x.gsi.gov.uk</a>
Link to published statement about the breach (if relevant)	Link will be published on <a href="#">this page</a> .
Date of breach report	14 <sup>th</sup> November 2019

## 2. Circumstances of breach

Relevant principle(s) and practice(s)	<b>Code of Practice: Trustworthiness (T3.6)</b> Statistics should be released to all users at 9.30am on a weekday.
Date of occurrence of breach	<b>14<sup>th</sup> November 2019</b>
<p><i>Give an account of what happened including roles of persons involved, dates, times etc</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DoJ Press Office is responsible for publishing documents online and was due to release the statistical bulletin “<b>Northern Ireland Youth Justice Agency Annual Workload Statistics 2018/19</b>” at 9.30am on 14 November 2019.</li> <li>On Wednesday 6 November 2019 the relevant DoJ Assistant Statistician contacted (phone call followed by email) the DoJ Press Office to advise of the publication of the bulletin due on 14 November 2019.</li> <li>Following normal practices, the relevant DoJ Assistant Statistician sent an e-mail to DoJ Press Office, at 9.31 am on 13 November, with instructions to publish the above bulletin and related material at 9.30 am on 14 November.</li> <li>The responsible Assistant Statistician telephoned the Press Office at 8.18 am on 14 November to confirm the necessary arrangements had been made for publication.</li> <li>At 9.12am on 14 November the Assistant Statistician was made aware that the Press Office were unable to upload the bulletin to the internet and consequently the publication did not go ‘live’ in the link on the website until 9.55am. The Press Office contact said that he was awaiting contact from a colleague to provide technical guidance.</li> <li>The colleague referenced above is the contact normally responsible for uploading publications, but was on leave on 14 November. On this occasion, the task was carried out by a less experienced member of staff who lacked the knowledge required to resolve these issues. The situation was resolved after the colleague had provided assistance.</li> <li>DoJ statisticians are not trained on the website content management system and therefore were not in a position to offer assistance to Press Office.</li> <li>The senior statistician was immediately made aware of the breach.</li> </ul>	

## 3. Impact of the breach

<p><i>Provide details of the impact of the breach both inside the producer body and externally</i></p> <p>As the publication was not available at the time of release, notification of the release on social media and to external users was delayed. No known press reports were published</p>
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before the full release on the DOJ website. No complaints are expected and none have been made to date.

#### 4. Corrective actions (taken or planned) to prevent re-occurrence

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

##### **Short term actions**

The Responsible Assistant Statistician kept in close contact with the DoJ Press Office contact to ensure the issue was resolved as promptly as possible.

##### **Longer term actions**

The Senior Statistician met with the Senior Information Officer in the DoJ Press Office on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2019 and discussed the issue and what steps could be taken by the DoJ Press Office and/or the Statistics branch to prevent a re-occurrence.

The Senior Statistician emphasised the importance of releasing official statistics publications at 9.30am and NISRAs obligations under the Code of Practice for Statistics.

During the discussion, the press office explained that the member of staff with responsibility for uploading documents to the website was on leave on the day of publication and the task had been undertaken by a less experienced member of staff. When this member of staff had difficulty with uploading the publication on to the website, they did not have the knowledge to resolve the issue and therefore needed to contact the person normally responsible for uploading publications (who was on leave) for assistance. This caused a delay and led to the breach. The lack of contingency within the Press Office presents an ongoing risk of a subsequent breach for the Statistics Branch and therefore needs addressed. It was also identified that the Press Office have a heavy workload and providing the resource to meet the Statistics Branch requirements can be challenging.

Consequently it was agreed that responsibility for uploading the DoJ, YJA and NICTS publications would pass to the Statistics Branch. A DoJ Statistician would be given editorial access to the website, enabling them to upload and publish documents with full training provided by the experienced member of staff within the Press Office. To ensure contingency a second Statistician would be trained by their colleague and would also be given editorial access. The Statistics Branch would make arrangements to ensure that at least one of the trained individuals was available to upload the publications on the required days. This along with access to website editors in other Departments across NISRA who can provide advice should minimise the risk that a similar breach will occur again.