

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

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

<b>Title and link to statistical output</b>	<p>Births, deaths and other vital events – Third quarter 2019</p> <p>Web landing page:  <a href="https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/statistics-and-data/statistics/statistics-by-theme/vital-events/general-publications/births-deaths-and-other-vital-events-quarterly-figures/3rd-quarter-2019">https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/statistics-and-data/statistics/statistics-by-theme/vital-events/general-publications/births-deaths-and-other-vital-events-quarterly-figures/3rd-quarter-2019</a></p> <p>Direct publication URL:  <a href="https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files//statistics/births-marriages-deaths-quarterly/19/q3/quarter-3-19-publication.pdf">https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files//statistics/births-marriages-deaths-quarterly/19/q3/quarter-3-19-publication.pdf</a></p>
<b>Name of producer organisation</b>	National Records of Scotland
<b>Name and contact details of person dealing with report</b>	<p>Alan Ferrier, Head of Demographic Statistics  <a href="mailto:alan.ferrier@nrscotland.gov.uk">alan.ferrier@nrscotland.gov.uk</a>            0131 314 4530</p>
<b>Link to published statement about the breach (if relevant)</b>	-
<b>Date of breach report</b>	16 December 2019

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

<b>Relevant principle(s) and practice(s)</b>	Practice T3.6 - Statistics should be released to all users at 9.30am on a weekday.
<b>Date of occurrence of breach</b>	10 December 2019
<p>In preparation for publication release at 9.30am on Wednesday 11 December, the vital events statistics team at NRS gave pre-release access to the statistical news release to a communications officer in the Scottish Government to issue to the media at 9.30am on the date of publication.</p> <p>In error, the communications officer issued the news release to the media one day early – at 9.30am on 10 December. They also uploaded the news release to the Scottish Government website.</p> <p>They quickly realised the error and the news release was taken down from the website at 9.45am. The following correction was then issued to the media:</p> <p><b>National Records of Scotland statistics - 'births, deaths and other vital events - third quarter, 2019' were issued earlier today in error. Please note publication date and time is tomorrow (Wednesday 11 December) at 9.30am.</b></p>	

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

Following an internet search, there was no evidence that any media outlets had published stories containing the statistics before the publication date on Wednesday 11 December at 9.30am.

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

The Office of the Chief Statistician (OCS) met Communications to discuss the incident. New guidance has been issued for dealing with statistical news releases. The guidance doesn't directly provide a solution for this specific issue as the individual concerned was well aware of the procedures, and it was just a genuine oversight on their part. However, the new guidance is clearer on roles and the process, including the importance of communication. OCS will be delivering training to all communications staff to ensure that everyone is aware of their responsibilities, and this will be repeated as and when required.