

REPORT OF A BREACH OF THE CODE OF PRACTICE FOR STATISTICS

1. Core Information

Title and link to statistical output	<p>Perceptions of Crime: Findings from the 2018-19 Northern Ireland Safe Community Survey</p> <p>https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/perceptions-crime-findings-2018-19-northern-ireland-safe-community-survey</p>
Name of producer organisation	Department of Justice (DoJ)
Name and contact details of person dealing with report	<p>Joan Ritchie</p> <p>Joan.Ritchie@justice-ni.x.gsi.gov.uk</p>
Link to published statement about the breach (if relevant)	<p>Link will be published on this page:</p> <p>https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/perceptions-crime-findings-2018-19-northern-ireland-safe-community-survey</p>
Date of breach report	27 February 2020

2. Circumstances of breach

Relevant principle(s) and practice(s)	<p>Principle T3 – Orderly Release</p> <p>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</p>
Date of occurrence of breach	27 February 2020
<p><i>Give an account of what happened including roles of persons involved, dates, times etc</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As part of pre-release access (PRA) arrangements, an email with attached report, infographic and ministerial submission was circulated to the relevant staff members at 9.42am on 26 February 2020. The body of the email clearly highlighted that the information was restricted until 9.30am on Thursday 27 February, as did headers on the report and infographic. The email also contained a document entitled 'Dos and Don'ts for Officials with Pre-release Access' which again stated that the pre-release figures should not be shared with anyone not named on the pre-release access list for any purpose whatsoever and that internal briefing should not be provided to anyone outside the pre-release access list. At 9.05am on 27 February a Ministerial briefing document was issued by email by the policy lead detailing the findings from the publication. The distribution list included individuals not on the pre-release access list. The breach was noted by statistics staff, also copied in, at 10.00am. Discussions were arranged at the earliest opportunity to report the breach. 	

3. Impact of the breach

Provide details of the impact of the breach both inside the producer body and externally

Ten Civil Servants within DoJ, who were not on the PRA list, had access to some of the headline results prior to release. As the breach only occurred twenty-five minutes before the report was published and given the nature of the statistics involved (perceptions of crime), the impact is believed to be minimal.

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

Statisticians contacted the individual involved to inform them of the breach. Going forward Statisticians will arrange bespoke briefing sessions to ensure PRA recipients are clear regarding their obligations. These will supplement and reinforce the existing measures.

The pending letter from NISRA's Chief Executive to the Permanent Secretary of the Department of Justice, outlined in the recent [Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service breach report](#), will be amended to explicitly include reference to the Department's obligations regarding pre-release access.