

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



## 1. Core Information

<b>Title and link to statistical output</b>	HIV in Scotland: update to 31 December 2019 <a href="https://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/web-resources-container/hiv-in-scotland-update-to-31-december-2019/">https://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/web-resources-container/hiv-in-scotland-update-to-31-december-2019/</a>
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<b>Link to published statement about the breach (if relevant)</b>	N/A
<b>Date of breach report</b>	26/07/2020

## 2. Circumstances of breach

<b>Relevant principle(s) and practice(s)</b>	<b>T3.6 Statistics should be released to all users at 9.30am on a weekday</b>
<b>Date of occurrence of breach</b>	<b>23/06/2020</b>
<p>Just before 09:30am the team responsible for the publication in Health Protection Scotland, part of Public Health Scotland, conducted a final review of the text following last-minute feedback. In particular, they reviewed a key point in relation to an impression of misrepresentation of Health Protection Scotland's role in reducing of HIV infection in Scotland. In doing so, they required authorisation from their senior clinical team who, coincidentally, were also heavily involved in the daily COVID-19 surveillance effort at the time.</p> <p>The senior clinical team had worked with the team very closely in preparing the HIV publication and as such were critical to offering an opinion on the revised text. Unfortunately, by the time of rectification authorisation, the resulting go-live was 1.50pm, thus incurring a 4 hour and 20 minute delay.</p> <p>Most clinical teams in Public Health Scotland are deployed to various COVID-19 efforts and it is difficult to remove them from the flurry of COVID-19 activities in Health Protection Scotland at very short notice.</p>	

## 3. Impact of the breach

<p>Following the publication go-live, there has been no reaction from anyone in the public or from any of our stakeholders in respect of the delay, that we are aware of, and there have been no queries from anyone about the publication since it went live.</p> <p>It is not a high profile publication at this point in time, when compared with some of our other publications.</p>
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No press reports were issued before or after the publication. The impact is negligible.

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

The Public Health Scotland statistical governance team discussed measures that can put in place to make sure key senior individuals or their delegated deputies who are critical to future publications make themselves available the week before and week of the publication, even if it is for very short periods of time. Where this is not possible, alternative arrangements will be made with other equivalent senior staff so that they can be placed on stand-by.

The team fully understands the seriousness of not publishing on time and the potential effects on our relationship with users. The statistical governance team is also revisiting its internal guidance to see whether there are additional guidance notes that can be provided for our analytical teams on their quality assurance processes to prevent the occurrence of similar issues, and how they should respond to a similar situation.

As a learning point, a future intervention would be for Public Health Scotland to send a tweet out to our users about the fact that a publication will be late to go live and the reasons for being late in order to be as transparent as possible.