

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



## 1. Core Information

<b>Title and link to statistical output</b>	COVID-19 and self-isolation among students: Lessons learnt (September to November 2020)  <a href="#">COVID-19 and self-isolation among students: Lessons learnt (September to November 2020) - Downloads - Public Health Scotland</a>
<b>Name of producer organisation</b>	Public Health Scotland
<b>Name and contact details of person dealing with report</b>	Richmond Davies <a href="mailto:richmond.davies@phs.scot">richmond.davies@phs.scot</a>
<b>Name and contact details of Head of Profession for Statistics/Lead Official</b>	Scott Heald <a href="mailto:scott.heald@phs.scot">scott.heald@phs.scot</a>
<b>Link to published statement about the breach (if relevant)</b>	N/A
<b>Date of breach report</b>	09/12/2020

## 2. Circumstances of breach

<b>Relevant principle(s) and practice(s)</b>	<b>T3 Orderly Release</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>09/12/2020</b>
<p>Although T3.6 of the Code of Practice for Statistics states that Statistics should be released to all users at 9.30am on a weekday, it has been agreed that COVID-19 related statistics should be released to all users at 12:00 noon on a Wednesday.</p> <p>There had been a miscommunication in organisation which led to the Digital Content team being asked to make the page live at 9:30 in line with normal statistical publications. This would normally be the case for Health statistics which are released on a Tuesday at 9:30. However, a second process which relates to COVID specific publications being released at 12:00 on a Wednesday, was missed on this occasion as there was less awareness of the COVID specific part of the process.</p> <p>At 09:30am on Wednesday the 9<sup>th</sup> December, the above COVID related publication was released to all users. The earlier than agreed time release was highlighted internally at 10:12am and following discussion, the live link was removed shortly after. Confirmation of the removal of the link was received by Statistical Governance at 10:53am, though the link had been removed prior to this particular time point.</p>	

## 3. Impact of the breach

<p>Following the earlier than agreed publication go-live, there has been no reaction from anyone in the public or from any of our stakeholders, that we are aware of, and there have been no queries from anyone about the publication since it went live early or subsequently after it then went live again correctly on time.</p>
--

COVID-19 publications are high profile at the moment, through this particular publication was not as high profile in comparison to other COVID-19 publications at this point in time. 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 are in regular contact with Research, Publishing and Communication colleagues across the organisation. Recent meetings with various departments have helped to increase the understanding on statistical governance guidelines and requirements and the regular communication channels with these colleagues have been established. The Statistical Governance team aims to maintain these communication channels.

The Statistical Governance team have since sent a confirmation email to all those involved in this incident to advise on the correct process and have offered for anyone involved to contact the team for advice on any future publications. Contact details have been made available. The aim of this is to help mitigate any future breaches of this nature, especially to those who are likely to be involved with COVID related statistics.

The Statistical Governance team will also offer to arrange a session with any other appropriate PHS Directorate/Departments to discuss Statistical Governance requirements to ensure awareness of COVID and Health publishing rules is high. We are in the process of completing this action in a bid to mitigate future breaches.