

## Report of a breach of the Code of Practice for Statistics

### Core Information

Information needed	Response
Title and link to statistical output	MRSA bacteraemia: monthly data by location of onset and NHS organisation, from November 2019 to November 2020  <a href="#">MRSA bacteraemia: monthly data by location of onset and NHS organisation, from November 2019 to November 2020</a>
Name of producer organisation	Public Health England
Name and contact details of person dealing with report	Sobia Wasti
Name and contact details of Head of Profession for Statistics or Lead Official	Clare Griffiths Head of Profession for Official Statistics Public Health England Health Improvement Directorate Suite 3b, Cunard Building Water Street Liverpool, L3 1DS
Link to published statement about the breach (if relevant)	Not applicable
Date of breach report	06/01/2021

### Circumstances of breach

Information needed	Response
Relevant principle(s) and practice(s)	Trustworthiness pillar: T3: Orderly release  T3.6: Statistics should be released to all users at 9.30am on a weekday.
Date of occurrence of breach	06/01/2021

Please give an account of what happened including roles of persons involved, dates and times:

On 06 January 2021, the 6 webpages with the xlsx and ods spreadsheets forming the monthly healthcare associated infection (HCAI) counts National Statistics release were uploaded for publication on GOV.UK by the Information Officer in the HCAI and AMR (Antimicrobial Resistance) Team. The Information Officer submitted the pages to the Digital Content Team for the usual 'second pair of eyes' check and scheduled publication at 9.30am on 6 January 2021.

On the morning of 6 January, the Information Officer had checked the publications online by checking each of the pages and the file names and titles were correct. The Information Officer would normally download each file and check the data however on this occasion, due to conflicting priorities, this did not occur.

The team were notified by a user of the missing methicillin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) data at 10.36am. The Information officer checked the pre-release files and files uploaded onto Whitehall (the internal publication system) and found that the correct MRSA files had been sent for pre-release but at some point the MRSA tables for the Whitehall web upload had been accidentally saved over with the methicillin sensitive

*Staphylococcus aureus* (MSSA) tables. This meant for a short period of time, that the MSSA tables appeared in place of the MRSA tables on the MRSA publication webpage as well as the MSSA publication webpage.

The Information Officer proceeded to swiftly rectify the error and upload the correct MRSA data. A project management ticket was raised and the digital content team were contacted via Skype and asked for the page to be checked and re-published urgently. The page was re-published at 11.00am.

## Impact of the breach

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

There was minimal impact to PHE but it did cause concern to those involved. The oversight was discovered and corrected as soon as possible. We received 4 emails from external stakeholders about the delay, whom were responded to as soon as the correct data was published and a public change note was also added to the GOV.UK page.

The release had been pre-announced on the gov.uk release calendar, so a user would have been aware that part of the release was missing and could have requested urgent access using an email address on the previous release.

## 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:

As soon as the Information Officer was notified of the delay, they immediately investigated the issue, rectified it and contacted the Digital Content Team to request that the page be re-published with a public change note.

This hasn't occurred before. But the team have proposed a second check of the tables to be uploaded by the Information Assistant, to ensure that the correct data is saved under the correct title. The digital content team conduct a check before they publish the page, where they check the file name matches the title added to the updated page.

This occurrence has acted as a reminder of the need to systematically include a check of all official statistics for publication on the pre-announced release date, at 9.30am and to ensure each file is downloaded from the page and checked it contains the correct data.