

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

## Core Information

Information needed	Response
Title and link to statistical output	Statistical Bulletin, Higher Level Apprenticeships in Northern Ireland, academic years 2017/18 – 2019/20  <a href="https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/articles/higher-level-apprenticeship-activity">https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/articles/higher-level-apprenticeship-activity</a>
Name of producer organisation	Department for the Economy (Northern Ireland)
Name and contact details of person dealing with report	Seana McIlwaine <a href="mailto:seana.mcilwaine@economy-ni.gov.uk">seana.mcilwaine@economy-ni.gov.uk</a> Phone: 02890257708
Name and contact details of Head of Profession for Statistics or Lead Official	Nicola Fisher, Senior Principal Statistician <a href="mailto:nicola.fisher@economy-ni.gov.uk">nicola.fisher@economy-ni.gov.uk</a> Phone: 02890257510
Link to published statement about the breach (if relevant)	
Date of breach report	15 March 2021

## Circumstances of breach

Information needed	Response
Relevant principle(s) and practice(s)	T3: Orderly release  T3.3: Access to statistics before their public release should be limited to those involved in the production of the statistics.  T3.4: Circulation of statistics in their final form ahead of their publication should be restricted to eligible recipients
Date of occurrence of breach	15 March 2021

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

On 15 March 9.30am, an individual in another department with the same name as someone with pre-release access (PRA) was sent an email and attachments containing embargoed statistics by a statistician in the Department for the Economy (DfE).

The wrong individual was inadvertently sent an email containing embargoed statistics at 9:30am during the pre-release period. The official had the same name as the intended recipient. On noticing the error, the official who was sent the information inadvertently was contacted at 10.59am, by phone and email. They had not opened the email and it was requested they delete the email – confirmation of this was received at 11.21am.

## Impact of the breach

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

There has been no external impact of the breach. The embargoed statistics were briefly available to an official without pre-release access, however the responsible statistician contacted the official and received confirmation that the statistics had not been read and the email had been deleted on request. There is no impact on the official release of the statistics at 9.30am on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

## 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:

With a view to minimising the risk of human error, all staff in the DfE statistical team have been reminded about the importance of the accuracy of PRA release e-mails. Branch procedures have been revised to ensure that the named recipients are double checked prior to issue, ensuring to click on the individual email addresses of all recipients prior to issuing the email to ensure the correct contact is selected.