

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

## Core Information

Information needed	Response
Title and link to statistical output	<a href="#">Attendance in education and early years settings during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak</a>
Name of producer organisation	Department for Education
Name and contact details of person dealing with report	Gemma Coleman <a href="mailto:gemma.coleman@education.gov.uk">gemma.coleman@education.gov.uk</a>
Name and contact details of Head of Profession for Statistics or Lead Official	David Simpson <a href="mailto:david.simpson@education.gov.uk">david.simpson@education.gov.uk</a>
Link to published statement about the breach (if relevant)	
Date of breach report	01/04/21

## Circumstances of breach

Information needed	Response
Relevant principle(s) and practice(s)	<p><b>T3.3</b> Access to statistics before their public release should be limited to those involved in the production of the statistics and the preparation of the release, and for quality assurance and operational purposes. Accurate records of those who have access before they are finalised should be maintained.</p> <p><b>T3.4</b> The circulation of statistics in their final form ahead of their publication should be restricted to <a href="#">eligible recipients</a>, in line with the rules and principles on pre-release access set out in legislation for the UK and devolved administrations. The details of those granted access should be recorded, together with clear justifications for access. No indication of the statistics should be made public and the statistics should not be given to any other party without prior permission for access. The list of recipients should be reviewed regularly and kept to a minimum.</p>
Date of occurrence of breach	31/03/21

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

The Department shares local authority level data with local authorities and other government departments via a service called View Your Education Data. The service is a Power BI dashboard that is updated twice a day with daily data. Local authorities are able to see data for responding institutions from their own local authority and other local authorities. Users with access to the dashboard are advised that this data is shared for operational purposes only and not for onward sharing, this is made clear within the dashboard itself. This data shared are not the official statistics in their final form.

On 31 March 2021, colleagues in the Department for Education media office were contacted by a reporter from the Lancashire Post. The reporter had obtained figures for the number of pupils that had been asked to self-isolate in schools in Lancashire and Preston in the week to 28 March 2021. A similar metric is due to be published by the Department within the COVID attendance statistics at midday on 8 April 2021. The Department publishes daily data at national level data each week, and local authority data for the preceding half term each half term.

Colleagues in the media office contacted the statistics team who confirmed that the figures were not published. The media office team contacted the journalist to advise that the data was not published and that the Department could not confirm the accuracy of the figures until published on 8 April. The journalist confirmed that the data had been provided by Lancashire local authority.

## Impact of the breach

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

Relatively low impact. The figures released were not the official statistics in their final form. They represent a very small portion of the overall picture – one metric for one local authority relating to one week. The media outlet [published the article](#) on Friday 2 April. None of the metrics in the article were actually published in the Attendance in education and early years settings during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak release on 8 April 2021 since the statistics contained within the media article are at a lower geographical level and calculated differently from the raw data.

## 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 part of the data share, the Department explicitly states that the information is shared for operational use only and should not be shared further. This text will be reviewed to ensure that the consequences of onward sharing, including breach of the Code of Practice for Statistics, are clear.

The Department will continue to engage with local authority users to prevent data being shared inappropriately. The Department will contact users of the data in Lancashire local authority to understand how this data was released and to reduce the likelihood of it happening again.