Examples of practices consistent with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics

Introduction

1. The *Code of Practice for Official Statistics*[1] comprises eight high level principles and three protocols, supplemented by some 74 specific practices. In most cases these practices are not prescriptive – that is, the *Code* does not normally set out how the practices should be met, in recognition of the fact that there are often a number of different ways of complying with them, and that these will vary according to the specific context in which the statistics are produced.

2. This document lists examples of practices that are consistent with the *Code*. These were identified by the Assessment team as part of the first cycle of assessment that took place from 2009 to 2012, supplemented by other approaches that the team considers would support *Code* compliance. They are not definitive, and we expect to add to them over time. Some of the examples will apply differently in different situations; there is also some duplication between the approaches suggested.

3. This guidance therefore provides an opportunity for statistical producers to consider which of these examples can help them most in complying with the *Code* in their individual situations, as required by section 13(1) of the *Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007*[2]. **It is important not to treat this as a checklist** – there is no minimum number of activities required for compliance, for example, and the examples are not listed in priority order. The decision about whether to designate a set of statistics as National Statistics ultimately rests with the Statistics Authority as required by the *Act.*

4. The guidance follows the structure of the *Code* – principles, protocols (except Protocol 1 – User engagement – which is a summary of other elements of the *Code*), and practices. The first column of each table sets out the *Code*'s practices; the second column shows the examples of how the practice might be met.

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[1] http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html
[2] http://www.opsi.gov.uk/Acts/acts2007/pdf/ukpga_20070018_en.pdf

Principle 1: Meeting user needs **The production, management and dissemination of official statistics should meet the requirements of informed decision-making by government, public services, business, researchers and the public.**	
Practice	**Examples of ways to comply with the *Code***
1.1 Engage effectively with users of statistics to promote trust and maximise public value, in accordance with Protocol 1.	Contact known users of the statistics or their representatives (from government, and beyond – for example local authorities, business, academia, voluntary sector, Eurostat) regularly. Seek to identify unknown users through networking, reviewing web usage, internet searching and so on. Use StatsUserNet[3] and a wide range of social media channels (such as blogs, twitter, and YouTube) to alert users to newly released statistics and to engage in discussion with users about the statistics. Contribute to relevant seminars, conferences, on-line fora or other events to promote and discuss the statistics. Publish records of meetings, workshops and conferences. Document how you identify and contact your users. Maintain records of the ways that you engage with users and deal with queries from users. Adopt a system for systematically reviewing users' views and feeding these into your statistical planning process. Publish details of the issues raised by users and the decisions that you have made as a result, along with justification of those decisions. Feed back to users the decisions that you have made in relation to the statistics. Play an active role in user groups, and try to gain active support from user groups. Review the effectiveness of different means of engaging with your users. Conduct 'user satisfaction' surveys, and evaluate the evidence from them in order to improve the statistics. Ask for feedback in statistical releases and on your website. Collect and analyse data on the use of statistics – for example, the number of web accesses or downloads – and systematically review and act upon these in order to improve the statistics.
1.2 Investigate and document the needs of users of official statistics,	Identify, through the engagement described under Principle 1, practice 1, the beneficial ways in which the

[3] http://www.statsusernet.org.uk/Home/

the use made of existing statistics, and the types of decisions they inform.	statistics are used, and the types of decisions that are based on them. Document and publish those uses – for example using the framework in the Authority's Monitoring Brief on *The Use Made of Official Statistics*[4] . Publish (sensible) speculation about the 'potential' use of the statistics. Publish case studies of decisions that have been informed by the statistics.
1.3 Adopt systematic statistical planning arrangements, including transparent priority setting, that reflect the obligation to serve the public good.	Document your statistical planning arrangements, including explaining how users can (and have) influence(d) your plans, and how you prioritise your statistical activity. Publish a statistical business plan. Consult publicly (formally where appropriate) and publish responses to such consultations. Review user requests in order to identify emerging needs.
1.4 Publish statistical reports according to a published timetable that takes account of user needs.	Publish a timetable of forthcoming releases (twelve months ahead). Publish material that summarises users' needs (about scheduling, timeliness and frequency), describe how the timetable meets these needs and describe any unmet needs.
1.5 Publish information about users' experiences of statistical services, data quality, and the format and timing of reports.	Ask users for their views about the statistics. Analyse these views and publish a summary of them. Publish minutes and records of meetings with users. Publish reports of consultations with users about their experiences of using the statistics. Conduct user satisfaction surveys, and publish the results of them.

[4] http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/monitoring/monitoring-briefs/monitoring-brief-6-2010---the-use-made-of-official-statistics.pdf

Principle 2: Impartiality and objectivity **Official statistics, and information about statistical processes, should be managed impartially and objectively**	
Practice	**Examples of ways to comply with the *Code***
2.1 Publish statistical reports in an orderly manner, in accordance with Protocol 2.	See Protocol 2.
2.2 Present statistics impartially and objectively.	Include commentary that describes the policy context around the statistics without endorsing or criticising (or appearing to) those policies. Include commentary that describes trends and changes in the statistics neutrally, without focusing on the most positive or negative aspects. Ensure that commentary is written by people independent of those responsible for policy or operations. Present time series with a neutral start point; and that are complete. Deal promptly and openly with any public criticism of the objectivity of the statistics. Publish details of improvements made to statistical processes as a result.
2.3 Make official statistics equally available to all, subject to statutory provisions for pre-release access.	Ensure that your website is able to release statistics at 9.30am. Publish statistical reports in HTML and PDF formats, and publish accompanying data in re-usable formats such as Excel or CSV. Provide clear, accessible instructions about how to obtain the statistics in alternative formats. Publish responses to requests for data at the same time as sending the response to whoever made the request.
2.4 Announce changes to methods or classifications well in advance of the release of the changed statistics.	Announce future changes to methods or classifications within statistical releases and on your website in the same place that the statistics are released. Ensure that you announce changes sufficiently ahead of time, ideally in the previous period's publication. Alert stakeholders to future changes, for example by email, twitter, and announcements on StatsUserNet. Engage users in the process of changing methods and classifications. Discuss potential changes in user groups and other similar fora.
2.5 Publish details of any exemption from the practices of the Code, as agreed by the UK Statistics Authority.	Publish details of exemptions on your website, in the same place that the statistics are published.
2.6 Publish a Revisions Policy for those outputs that are subject to be scheduled revisions. Provide a	Publish a Revisions Policy (either for your organisation as a whole, or for sets of statistics separately, or both) that states the principles and procedures underpinning

statement explaining the nature and extent of revisions at the same time that they are released.	revisions, and ideally that refers to your procedures for dealing with any unscheduled revision necessary. Provide a clear link to the Revisions Policy in statistical releases. Include a clear description of the nature and extent of revisions prominently in statistical releases. Clearly identify the affected statistics, and the size (and impact) of revisions. Clearly identify any specific details about likely future revisions. Analyse revisions, and adapt methods accordingly in order to improve methods and reduce potential future revisions.
2.7 Correct errors discovered in statistical reports, and alert stakeholders, promptly.	Publish a policy relating to checking for and correcting errors, linked with your Revisions Policy. Publish promptly a clear statement about any errors (for instance an erratum notice) detailing the error, the magnitude of corrections and the implications for users. Alert stakeholders to corrections, for example by email, twitter and announcements on StatsUserNet. Provide a link, in the same place that the statistics are published, to the superseded release, making clear the status of each release
2.8 Release all regular statistical reports on the internet without charge to the user.	
2.9 For any supplementary statistical services for which a charge is made, adopt clear pricing policies that comply with legislation and relevant policy.	Produce (and ideally publish) a pricing policy which describes the nature of the supplementary service, how it differs from the provision of free statistics, the charges to be made to the user and the situations in which charges will be made. Make it clear how users can request supplementary statistical services.

Principle 3: Integrity **At all stages in the production, management and dissemination of official statistics, the public interest should prevail over organisational, political or personal interests.**	
Practice	**Examples of ways to comply with the *Code***
3.1 Issue statistical reports separately from any other statement or comment about the figures and ensure that no statement or comment – based on prior knowledge – is issued to the press or published ahead of the publication of the statistics.	Ensure that statistical releases are clearly marked as such, and easily distinguishable from other statements. Establish a process that enables statistics teams to be involved in developing and approving statistical elements of policy statements before they are published. Include in press and Ministerial statements a clear indication that they are not a statistical release. To aid this clarity, do not include in the National Statistics logo on press or ministerial statements. Establish a process that minimises the risk that press or ministerial statements are published before associated statistical releases. Produce (ideally publish) a statement about how your organisation complies with the Cabinet Secretary's guidance on *Good Practice in the use of Official Statistics*[5].
3.2 Ensure that those producing statistical reports are protected from any political pressures that might influence the production or presentation of the statistics	Produce guidance for statistical staff detailing their roles and responsibilities, including procedures: • to ensure that the statistics are released correctly and protected from inappropriate comment and unscheduled release; • to follow should they experience or observe any political interference; and • covering the granting of pre-release access to the statistics. Produce guidance for those outside the statistical producer teams explaining the requirements of the *Code of Practice* in relation to political pressures. Run seminars and provide briefing for Ministers, senior policy officials and others on the *Code of Practice*. Run seminars explaining the arrangements for protecting statistical staff from political pressures. Require written declarations from those individuals with pre-release access that they will not seek to change the content, presentation or timing of the statistics. Ensure that sufficient managerial separation exists between staff responsible for official statistics and other staff of the organisation.
3.3 Ensure that the relevant statistical Head of Profession has the sole responsibility for deciding on statistical methods, standards and procedures, and on the content and timing of statistical	Produce a document – for example a Statistical Governance Policy or signed agreement – that confirms that the Head of Profession is responsible for statistical matters. Implement a process to ensure that the Head of

[5] http://www.parliament.uk/documents/upload/letter-brennan-090227.pdf

releases.	Profession signs off every statistical release before publication. Produce a document outlining the Head of Profession's roles in relation to their sign-off of changes to methods, timetables etc, including any formal delegations from the Head of Profession.
3.4 Follow all statutory obligations and internationally endorsed guidelines governing the collection of data, confidentiality, and release.	Publish in a separate document alongside the statistics (links to) relevant obligations and guidelines, and describe the extent to which the statistics comply with those. Contribute to international (and other) groups, in order to share and develop best practice. Contribute to relevant seminars, conferences, on-line fora or other events to promote and discuss standards.
3.5 Inform the National Statistician about complaints that relate to professional integrity, quality or standards, whether or not they can be resolved directly.	Record such complaints, including details of the outcome. Publish a list of complaints, and improvements made to the statistical service, in your annual report or elsewhere.
3.6 Implement controls to ensure that individuals do not abuse the trust placed in them for personal gain.	Produce (and ideally publish) a policy describing such controls, including procedures for reporting, investigating and dealing with suspected abuse of trust.
3.7 Promote a culture within which statistical experts in government can comment publicly on statistical issues, including the misuse of official statistics.	Provide statisticians with training in dealing with the media. Enable statisticians to brief the media and comment publicly on the statistics (including any misuses of the statistics). Contribute to StatsUserNet discussions, blogs and produce twitter and YouTube material relating to the statistics. Contribute statistical papers to conferences and seminars.

Principle 4: Sound methods and assured quality **Statistical methods should be consistent with scientific principles and internationally recognised best practices, and be fully documented. Quality should be monitored and assured taking account of internationally agreed practices.**	
Practice	**Examples of ways to comply with the *Code***
4.1 Ensure that official statistics are produced according to scientific principles. Publish details of the methods adopted, including explanations of why particular choices were made.	Publish methodological report(s) covering data collection (including sampling frames and methods where relevant), processing (including validation and editing) and estimation, analysis and modelling methods. Publish the reasons for choices made especially where there is some cause for debate – for example different sources, or choice of 'not the obvious' methods or classifications. Explain the rationale for decisions where trade-offs have been made – for example between costs and quality, or between timeliness and other aspects of quality. Accompany statistical releases with suitable metadata. Use self-assessment tools, such as the Quality, Methods and Harmonisation Tool[6]. Publish the results of such self-assessment, including a record of decisions made as a result. Contribute to conferences, workshops and seminars relating to statistical methods. Engage with experts (including expert users) to improve the statistics. Establish a dedicated team or budget for methodological development.
4.2. Ensure that official statistics are produced to a level of quality that meets users' needs, and that users are informed about the quality of statistical outputs, including estimates of the main sources of bias and other errors, and other aspects of the European Statistical System definition of quality[7].	Publish information describing the level of quality that users require from the statistics; include in this a description of the extent to which the quality of the statistics meets their needs. Describe how the needs of various users have been taken into account in deciding the level of quality that will be delivered. Publish in the statistical release clear and helpful estimates of the possible errors in the statistics. Quantify (estimate) those errors where possible and present them clearly. Where errors can't be estimated, provide reasoned judgment about the likely magnitude and direction of the various errors, and the potential impact on the use of the statistics. Publish quality reports that include details of statistical errors and quality assurance procedures. Produce (and ideally publish) a quality assurance plan

[6] http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/method-quality/quality/harmonisation/index.html
[7] The six dimensions of the ESS Quality Framework are: relevance, accuracy, timeliness and punctuality, accessibility and clarity, comparability, and coherence

	that describes procedures to be undertaken to assure processing quality. See also Principle 8, practice 1.
4.3 Adopt quality assurance procedures, including the consideration of each statistical product against users' requirements, and of their coherence with other statistical products.	Produce a clear plan for managing all aspects of quality in the production process that takes into account users' views. Establish a central quality unit, quality committee or other arrangement dedicated to quality assurance and improvement. Document the statistical production process, and describe the way that quality is monitored at each stage. Ensure that members of staff understand the impact of their work on the quality of the statistics. Engage with users about the quality that they require from the statistics, and review the quality of the statistics against those requirements. Include in validation procedures, checks against other related statistics. Engage with producers of similar statistics to maximise the coherence of yours with theirs.
4.4 Publish quality guidelines, and ensure that staff are suitably trained in quality management.	Publish a quality assurance strategy laying out the principles and commitments relating to the quality of the statistics. Publish guidelines mentioned under Principle 4, practice 3. Produce a quality management training plan. Provide staff training (for example seminars) on quality management – as part of induction, and other ongoing courses.
4.5. Seek to achieve continuous improvement in statistical processes by, for example, undertaking regular reviews or releasing statistical work in progress such as *experimental statistics*[8].	Review your statistical products periodically. Publish the results of such reviews, together with an action plan and the results of actions taken. Involve external experts in reviews. Engage with other organisations (including international equivalent bodies) in reviewing methods. Measure the quality of the statistical processes using standard process quality measurement techniques. Publish a plan for the continuous improvement of statistical processes, and the reduction of non-sampling errors. Publish a plan for the evaluation of experimental statistics, including details of the way that you will

[8] Experimental statistics are new official statistics undergoing evaluation. They are published in order to involve users and stakeholders in their development and as a means to build in quality at an early stage.

	engage with users and deal with their feedback. Publish regular updates of progress with reviewing and developing statistics (including experimental statistics). Produce (ideally publish) a Quality Improvement Plan.
4.6 Promote comparability within the UK and internationally by, for example, adopting common standards, concepts, sampling frames, questions, definitions, statistical units and classifications (including common geographic referencing and coding standards). Make the reasons for any deviations from standard models publicly available.	Investigate and review (with the other UK administrations) the demand for coherent UK statistics. Include in validation procedures checks against other related statistics. Include references (or web links) to other UK producers' (similar) statistics alongside your statistics. Ideally publish material about the coherence with other related statistics, and implications for users' interpretation of your statistics. Contribute to relevant international or UK (4-country) joint projects or working groups. Provide descriptions of (or links to) international guidelines and standards. Describe the extent to which they have been adopted, or explanations of why they have not been adopted, and what the impact is on the statistics and their use and potential use. Benchmark your statistics against international standards periodically. Publish details of any divergence from common standards, and explain to users what this means in relation to their use of the statistics.
4.7 Where time series are revised, or changes are made to methods or coverage, produce consistent historical data where possible.	Evaluate the benefits against the costs of producing historical time series, in relation to users' needs. Publish relevant time series, or a clear explanation of why historical time series have not been produced (if this is the case) and provide any advice to users about how their needs for a consistent time series can be met. Produce clear commentary to quantify and explain changes and help users to deal with changed time series. (See also Principle 8, practice 2) Make any breaks in time series clear and publish whatever helpful analysis possible to help users use the series. Publish details of the methods used to produce consistent time series. Ensure that provisional and final estimates are clearly distinguishable.

Principle 5: Confidentiality **Private information about individual persons (including bodies corporate) compiled in the production of official statistics is confidential, and should be used for statistical purposes only.**	
Practice	**Examples of ways to comply with the *Code***
5.1 Ensure that official statistics do not reveal the identity of an individual or organisation, or any private information relating to them, taking into account other relevant sources of information	Describe how the statistical disclosure control methods were chosen, including an assessment of the resulting impact on the published statistics. Review the strength of statistical disclosure control rules periodically.
5.2 Keep confidential information secure. Only permit its use by trained staff who have signed a declaration covering their obligations under this Code.	Store data on limited access servers, password-protected databases or in locked storage facilities. Establish secure data transmission channels. Train members of staff in security issues. Ensure that those members of staff handling confidential data (including contractors) have signed a confidentiality declaration or have a confidentiality clause in their employment contracts. Review and update the signed declarations where appropriate.
5.3 Inform respondents to statistical surveys and censuses how confidentiality will be protected.	Publish a Survey Charter, which includes information about confidentiality. Include statements about confidentiality in flyers, introductory letters to respondents, as part of survey interviews and so on, describing how confidentiality will be protected, not just that it will be. Include a statement about your confidentiality protections arrangements on your website.
5.4 Ensure that arrangements for confidentiality protection are sufficient to protect the privacy of individual information, but not so restrictive as to limit unduly the practical utility of official statistics. Publish details of such arrangements.	Publish a statistical disclosure control policy, covering the trade off between risk and utility. Ensure that the policy takes into account Open Data[9] requirements. Review statistical disclosure control rules, especially concerning the trade off between risk and utility. Review statistical disclosure control methods against international standards. Use standard disclosure control software for microdata and tables – for example mu-Argus and tau-Argus. Participate in international working groups, committees, conferences etc relating to statistical disclosure control. Document your arrangements for approving the release of detailed statistics or microdata. Publish any relevant legal advice that you have received in relation to confidentiality protection.

[9] http://data.gov.uk/

5.5 Seek prior authorisation from the National Statistician or Chief Statistician in a Devolved Administration for any exceptions, required by law or thought to be in the public interest, to the principle of confidentiality protection. Publish details of such authorisations.	Publish details of authorisations in the same place that the statistics are published. Review your statistical disclosure control procedures in the light of the need to request exceptions.
5.6 In every case where confidential statistical records are exchanged for statistical purposes with a third party, prepare written confidentiality protection agreements covering the requirements under this Code. Keep an operational record to detail the manner and purpose of the processing.	Produce (and ideally publish) a statement of high-level principles regarding data sharing. Publish criteria detailing when access to data will be granted. Keep full records of when and with whom data have been shared, and for what reasons.

Principle 6: Proportionate burden **The cost burden on data suppliers should not be excessive and should be assessed relative to the benefits arising from the use of the statistics.**	
Practice	**Examples of ways to comply with the *Code***
6.1 Report annually the estimated costs (for example, on businesses, service providers, or the public) of responding to statistical surveys and strive to develop methods that will reduce the costs to individual organisations or people.	Publish estimates of respondent costs (either in time or monetary values) in survey metadata, organisational annual reports or similar documentation. Publish details of how you have calculated respondent costs, and provide estimates of the accuracy of the measures. Publish details about how you have evaluated alternative arrangements to minimise respondent costs, including: • Evaluation of all possible alternative sources of non-survey data; • The way that you have designed data collection instruments to minimise respondent burden; • Impact on estimates of reducing sample size or number of questions; • Collaboration with other departments when collecting similar data to minimise duplication across the Government Statistical Service[10]; and • Reviews of statistical methods to reduce (or spread) burden, for example use of coordinated sampling; and imputation and estimation techniques. Use low-burden data supply mechanisms – for example electronic data collection. Ensure that suppliers have the information that they need in order to be able to provide accurate data, and an accessible way of contacting the statistical team with queries. Engage with suppliers as part of developing low-burden data collection instruments – for example to align information requested as closely as possible with businesses' accounting systems or other processes. Publish clear guidance for data suppliers, including details about how they can engage with you about the burden.
6.2 Seek participation in statistical surveys through informed consent, rather than using statutory powers, wherever possible.	Evaluate the costs and benefits of using statutory powers to collect data, compared with voluntary survey taking. Include in covering letters and other similar material a description of the reason for the survey, the uses and importance of the statistics produced and the importance of responding to the survey. Provide survey respondents with details of how they can access survey results. Send a summary of previous results to survey respondents.
6.3 Promote statistical purposes actively in the design of	Engage proactively with the owners of administrative data systems to promote statistical purposes, including

[10] http://www.statistics.gov.uk/hub/government-statistical-service/index.html

administrative systems in order to enhance the statistical potential of administrative records.	contributing to relevant steering groups. Appoint a data sharing champion. Engage early in the design and specification of administrative systems. Include in metadata details of changes made to administrative sources in response to statistical requirements.
6.4 Analyse the costs of proposed new data requirements (to data suppliers) against the potential benefits.	Document the costs and benefits of proposed changes to data collection methods. Engage with users, data suppliers and other stakeholders before making decisions about collecting data for new statistical requirements.
6.5 Evaluate existing data sources and estimation techniques before undertaking new surveys.	Publish details of reviews of the possibilities and difficulties of using existing data sources and estimation techniques, compared with the costs and benefits of running new or extended surveys. Engage users, data suppliers and other stakeholders as part of the evaluation.

Principle 7: Resources The resources made available for statistical activities should be sufficient to meet the requirements of this Code and should be used efficiently and effectively.	
Practice	**Examples of ways to comply with the *Code***
7.1 Ensure that statistical services have the staff, financial and computing resources to produce, manage and disseminate official statistics to the standards of the Code.	Specify a budget for new investment or development work, with a view to using this to achieve efficiencies or increase value for money. Review the allocation of resources to statistical work regularly. Establish a process for considering new requests against existing outputs. Establish contingency plans in case of a funding shortfall as part of your risk management strategies. Bid for external funding, including from the Statistics Authority's Quality Improvement Fund. Cooperate with other statistical producers in order to remove duplication of work and reduce the overall resource needed to produce statistics.
7.2 Consult users before changing the allocation of resources to statistical activities. Include specific resources for user consultation in budgets.	Engage with users about statistical plans, including seeking feedback on draft plans. Publish your statistics business plan, and invite feedback from users. Include in your business plan details about how users' views have been sought and taken into account. Allocate a specific budget for consultation with users about the statistics.
7.3. Ensure that records are maintained showing the relationship between the statistical planning process, the work programme, the allocation of resources, and the outcomes.	Act on the recommendations of internal or external audit of financial and management arrangements. Make available reports of such audits or reviews. Ensure that user requirements are explicitly reflected in statistical business plans.
7.4 Monitor expenditure against work programmes and demonstrate effective stewardship of resources allocated to statistical work.	Monitor the costs required to produce each statistical output. Stop producing statistics where the user need does not justify their continued production. Ensure that appropriate contracts or service level agreements are in place with others who contribute to the production of your statistics. Publish a stewardship report listing the statistics produced, their costs and any other noteworthy features relating to statistical planning.
7.5 Seek to balance quality (for example, accuracy and timeliness) against costs (including both costs to government and data suppliers),	Review the quality of the statistics against the costs of producing them. Engage with users, data suppliers and other stakeholders in doing so. Clearly explain which aspects of quality have been

taking into account the expected uses of the statistics.	prioritised, and why, in relation to the uses of the statistics.
7.6 Ensure that appropriately skilled people are employed in the statistical production process. Use an appropriate competence framework to set the requirements of statistical posts and the development needs of staff, and support staff in developing their statistical, management and subject area knowledge.	Follow Government Statistical Service recruitment procedures (or equivalent, including those for one of the other analytical professions). Follow the Government Statistical Service competency framework (or equivalent). Provide induction training for the subject area (topic knowledge, statistical skills and wider knowledge). Provide comprehensive desk instructions. Establish mentoring arrangements, especially for statistical members of staff who are not managed by professional statisticians. Act on the results of staff satisfaction surveys.
7.7 Where administrative sources are used for statistical purposes, follow the practices set out in Protocol 3.	See Protocol 3.

Principle 8: Frankness and accessibility **Official statistics, accompanied by full and frank commentary, should be readily accessible to all users.**	
Practice	**Examples of ways to comply with the *Code***
8.1 Provide information on the quality and reliability of statistics in relation to the range of potential uses, and on methods, procedures, and classifications.	Describe, simply and prominently, information about the strengths and weaknesses of the statistics (including non-sampling and sampling errors), in relation to their use and potential use, in order that the statistics are not used inappropriately. Direct users to related statistics that may be more appropriate to their needs. Seek to develop a more complete understanding of the quality of the statistics, and develop appropriate ways of measuring the quality of them. Publish metadata that describes methods, and includes details of the classification systems used, along with any other relevant material. Ensure that metadata are clearly accessible from the relevant statistical releases and the place where the statistics are published. See also Principle 4, Practice 2.
8.2 Prepare and disseminate commentary and analysis that aid interpretation, and provide factual information about the policy or operational context of official statistics. Adopt formats for the presentation of statistics in graphs, tables and maps that enhance clarity, interpretability and consistency.	Engage with users about the formats in which they prefer your statistics to be presented. Include a narrative that complies with the Authority's Statement on *Standards for Statistical Reports*[11]. Refer to the UNECE's guide on writing about statistics[12] and the Government Statistical Service's guidance on writing about statistics[13]. Seek Plain English accreditation[14]. Follow good practice in relation to charts, graphs and so on. Follow a style guide for text, charts, maps, or other presentation formats in statistical releases.
8.3 Make statistics available in as much detail as is reliable and practicable, subject to legal and confidentiality constraints, offering choice and flexibility in the format according to the level of detail required by the user.	Engage with users about the level of detail that they require in the statistical outputs and associated data sets, and the formats that they prefer. Publish a dissemination policy outlining your approach to publishing statistics. Document how you have dealt with users' requests for alternative formats. Publish the criteria that you use to decide the level of

[11] http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/news/statement---standards-for-statistical-reports.pdf
[12] http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/writing/MDM_Part1_English.pdf
[13] http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/national-statistician/ns-reports--reviews-and-guidance/national-statistician-s-guidance/index.html
[14] http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/crystal-mark.html

	detail that you publish. Produce (and ideally publish) a dissemination policy that defines the procedures and standards for dissemination, and that complies with the government's Open Data policy. Provide easy access (and an effective search engine) from your statistical website to enable users to find the statistics at the level that they require. See also Principle 5.
8.4 Publicise official statistics in ways that enable users to identify and access information relevant to their needs. Make access to official statistics as straightforward as possible by providing easy-to-use entry points.	Ensure that your statistics web pages are clearly linked from your main producer homepage. Ensure that the search engine on your website enables users to find the statistics that they require. Provide prominent links to the statistics from news releases, policy pages and other relevant outputs. Provide links to related statistics, for example those of different periodicity, or earlier years' publications. Where releases have been reorganised, provide clear links to earlier sets of statistics. Provide clear links to associated documents such as methods documents, quality reports and detailed tables from the statistical releases themselves. Use a range of media, such as conferences, seminars, StatsUserNet, email alerts, newsletters, RSS Feeds, twitter feeds and other social media channels to publicise the statistics. Provide clear details on your website about the geographical and time coverage of the statistics. Provide links to where users can access statistics for other related geographies or time periods. Produce a publication catalogue for your statistics.
8.5 Ensure that official statistics are disseminated in forms that, as far as possible, are accessible to a range of different audiences, including those with disabilities.	Engage with users regarding dissemination methods; seek and act on their feedback. Ensure that your website conforms to W3C Double-A standard. Ensure that your website enables users to increase font size, use high contrast and various colour schemes, and is compatible with screen reader software. Publish your statistics in a range of formats, reflecting users' needs such as HTML and PDF and reusable formats such as Excel or CSV. Use plain English when writing commentary.
8.6 Ensure that official statistics are disseminated in forms that enable and encourage analysis	Engage with users about the file formats that they prefer.

and re-use. Release datasets and reference databases, supported by documentation, in formats that are convenient to users.	Provide tables in Excel or CSV (as a minimum standard), avoiding merged cells, unclear headings or other poor presentation. Make datasets available, subject to confidentiality constraints, in formats readable by standard statistical software. Provide consistent time series data to permit easy time series analysis. Supply metadata alongside tables and datasets to enable users to use the data appropriately. Provide clear links between the statistical release and the related tables, and vice versa.
8.7 Manage official statistics in accordance with relevant public records legislation and codes of practice on records management. Deposit official statistics (accompanied by information about their purposes, design and methods) with the relevant national archive as required in legislation.	Produce (and ideally publish) an archiving policy, setting out the relevant legislation and how the policy addresses it. Provide links to archived statistics in the place where you publish your statistics. Accompany archived statistics with suitable metadata.

Protocol 2: Release practices **Statistical reports should be released into the public domain in an orderly manner that promotes public confidence and gives equal access to all, subject to relevant legislation[15].**	
Practice	**Examples of ways to comply with the *Code***
P2.1 Release statistical reports as soon as they are judged ready, so that there is no opportunity, or perception of opportunity, for the release to be withheld or delayed.	Explain any trade-off made between timeliness and other issues in order to eliminate any perception of unnecessary delays to the statistics. Consider the possibility of publishing preliminary results, depending on accuracy and user need. Explain, in advance, where you delay the publication of your statistics in order that they can be published alongside other relevant statistics (including those from other organisations).
P2.2 Publish a timetable of statistical releases for twelve months ahead.	Publish a full timetable of statistical releases for the following year on your website. Keep timetables up to date and alert users and other stakeholders to any changes in timetables by email, social media, StatsUserNet and so on, and by including a notice on your website, ideally in the place where the statistics are published.
P2.3 Ensure that all National Statistics can be accessed from the National Statistics Publication Hub [16].	Liaise with the Publication Hub team to minimise the risk of delay or non-publication. Periodically undertake spot checks to ensure that links to previous statistics remain live on the Publication Hub. Ensure that future release dates are available from the National Statistics Publication Hub.
P2.4 Issue statistical releases at the standard time of 9.30am on a weekday, to maintain consistency and to permit time for users to understand and respond to the information during normal working hours.	Publish details of plans to ensure publication at 9.30am including contingency plans such as emailing statistical releases to known users at 9.30am. Monitor the release of statistics, in order to be able to anticipate problems relating to release times.
P2.5 Draw public attention to any change to a pre-announced release date and explain fully the reasons for the change at the same time. The relevant statistical Head of Profession has the final decision and should not be influenced by non-statistical matters.	Publish details of changed release dates, including the reasons why, to be available on both your own website and the Publication Hub. Inform users about changes to publication plans, for example by StatsUserNet, email, twitter and posting on blogs. Produce (and ideally publish) a policy for dealing with changes to release dates.
P2.6 Include the name and contact details of the responsible statistician in statistical reports.	Ensure that statistical releases include the name of the responsible statistician (or the relevant statistical Head of Profession if that is felt more appropriate). Publish contact details for the statistician, Head of

[15] http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2008/draft/ukdsi_9780110832203_en_1 and http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/ssi2008/draft/sdsi_9780111000236_en_1
[16] http://www.statistics.gov.uk

	Profession or the statistical team (don't use generic enquiry email addresses or phone numbers)
P2.7 Subject to compliance with the rules and principles on pre-release access set out in legislation, limit access before public release to those people essential to production and publication, and for quality assurance and operational purposes. Publish records of those who have access prior to release.	Assume initially that no pre-release access is needed. Document (and ideally publish) details of your procedures for determining who can have pre-release access to the statistics. Publish a statement about how you comply with the pre-release access legislation. Publish lists of those involved in production or quality assurance of the statistics. Publish descriptions of the actual contribution made to the quality of statistics by each of those who have pre-release access for quality assurance purposes. Publish list of those who have pre-release access to the statistics. Publish descriptions of the actual positive impact made by those who have pre-release access to the final statistics. Publish details of the assumed negative consequences of each of those people not having pre-release access. Review frequently the list of those who have been granted pre-release access, with a view to reducing its length.
P2.8 Ensure that no indication of the substance of a statistical report is made public, or given to the media or any other party not recorded as eligible for access before publication. Report to the National Statistician immediately any accidental or wrongful release, and investigate the circumstances.	Publish a description of the measures that you have in place to protect the content of reports before publication. Remind those on pre-release access lists of their relevant responsibilities when circulating the statistics to them, and on other relevant occasions. Review the security of systems and processes set up to manage pre-release access and publication procedures. Review regularly the lists of those with access for quality assurance or other operational purposes, to ensure that lists are kept to a minimum and risk of accidental release is minimised.
P2.9 Ensure that government statements issued alongside official statistics, and referring to, or based upon, them: a. contain a prominent link to the statistical release and clearly refer to the source of the statistics; b. are labelled clearly as policy statements (or ministerial statements) and are readily distinguished from a statistical release; and c. meet basic professional standards (for example, statistics should be cited accurately, and charts should be drawn in an	Label accompanying statements clearly as being policy statements or ministerial statements. Include a clear link to the statistics that they contain. Produce (and ideally publish) a policy outlining procedures for releasing government statements, including a description of the statisticians' involvement in preparing them. Ensure that statisticians are included in the processes of quality assurance, advice and sign-off for policy statements. Produce (and ideally publish) a statement about how the organisation complies with the Cabinet Secretary's guidance on *Good Practice in the use of Official*

accurate and impartial way).	*Statistics*[17].

[17] http://www.parliament.uk/documents/upload/letter-brennan-090227.pdf

Protocol 3: The use of administrative sources for statistical purposes Administrative sources should be fully exploited for statistical purposes, subject to adherence to appropriate safeguards.	
Practice	**Examples of ways to comply with the *Code***
P3.1 Observe all statutory obligations and relevant codes of practice in relation to the protection of confidentiality and the handling of personal data.	List the relevant statutory obligations and codes of practice, and explain how these are met. See Principle 5, practices 1-4
P3.2 Only base statistics on administrative data where the definitions and concepts are good approximations to those appropriate for statistical purposes.	Document the relevant administrative sources (including those held outside the producer body), including descriptions of coverage, definitions and other supporting metadata. Publish reports of reviews of the usability of administrative data for relevant statistical purposes. Publish details of the differences between the statistical and administrative concepts, definitions, coverage or other supporting metadata. Include details about the steps taken to overcome the differences, and what these differences mean for users of the statistics. Include in commentary relevant information about the approximations that have been necessary in producing the statistics.
P3.3 Maximise opportunities for the use of administrative data, cross-analysis of sources and for the exchange and re-use of data, to avoid duplicating requests for information. Where possible, use common information technology and information management systems that facilitate the flow of information between producers of statistics	Set up effective arrangements between the administrative and statistical authorities to facilitate the use of administrative data for statistical purposes. Ensure that administrative data owners are aware of the way that those data are used (or could be used) for statistical purposes. Seek to overcome legislative and other restrictions to the effective sharing of data. Review available data sources regularly. Participate in relevant data sharing groups, committees etc. Document efforts to exploit existing data sources – for example through data matching or linking – to maximise the utility of these sources. Develop and publicise data 'marts' or 'warehouses' to provide users with opportunities to access, analyse and re-use data. Use electronic reporting systems which help to ensure the flow of standardised and timely administrative data. Use standard software wherever possible.
P3.4 Ensure that no action is taken within the producer body, or public statement made, that might undermine confidence in the	Set up and document appropriate safeguards and protocols in relation to management information, and any other information, that may be used in the production of official statistics.

independence of the statistics when released.	Document the procedures to be followed in the event that an action has been taken that could undermine confidence in the independence of the statistics. Take steps to ensure that users of management information (including staff in press offices) are aware of the relative roles and uses of it and of any official statistics that may be based on it. Run seminars and issue guidance to staff about maintaining confidence in the statistics.
P3.5 Prepare, in consultation with the National Statistician, a Statement of Administrative Sources which identifies the following: a. The administrative systems currently used in the production of official statistics. b. Procedures to be followed within the organisation to ensure that full account is taken of the implications for official statistics when changes to administrative systems are contemplated. c. Information on other administrative sources that are not currently used in the production of official statistics but have potential to be so used. d. Arrangements for providing the statistical staff, whether inside the producer body or elsewhere, with access to administrative data for statistical purposes. e. Arrangements for auditing the quality of administrative data used for statistical purposes. f. Arrangements for ensuring the security of statistical processes that draw on administrative data.	Publish a Statement of Administrative Sources which includes appropriately detailed information about issues in Principle 3, practice 5 a-f. Update the Statement to reflect new sources and new developments. Use the Statement to trigger discussions with data owners about data sharing, quality and so on. Engage proactively with those responsible for maintaining administrative systems, to maximise value for statistics. Be involved in any change control process and consider the implications for statistics ahead of changes to administrative systems. Review the arrangements for auditing the quality of administrative data to ensure their suitability for use in producing official statistics.