

BREACH OF THE CODE OF PRACTICE FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS

This document reports a breach of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, or the relevant Pre-release Access to Official Statistics Orders, to which the Code applies as if it included these orders.

1. Background information

Name of Statistical Output (including weblink to the relevant output or 'landing page')

Acute Hospital Activity and NHS Beds Information, Emergency Bed Days (75+)
<http://www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/Hospital-Care/>

Data also published on Scotland Performs
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/About/Performance/scotPerforms/partnerstories/NHSScotlandperformance/EmergencyBedDays75>

Name of Producer Organisation

NHS National Services Scotland - Information Services Division (ISD)

Name and contact details of the statistical Head of Profession (Lead Official in an Arm's Length Body) submitting this report, and date of report

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25 July 2013

2. Circumstances of breach

Relevant Principle/Protocol and Practice

Principle 2: Impartiality and objectivity; Practice 3: Make official statistics equally available to all, subject to statutory provisions for pre-release access

Protocol 2: Release Practices; Practice 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 for production and publication, and for quality assurance and operational purposes. Publish records of those who have access prior to release.

Date of occurrence

24 July 2013

Nature of breach (including links with previous breaches, if any)

Data for the 2012/13 monitoring of the target for "Emergency Admissions Bed Days (75+)" for Scotland was included in NHS Lothian Board Papers which were subsequently published on the Lothian website ahead of publication of the "Emergency Admissions Bed Days (75+)" data by ISD in September, as part of the "Acute Hospital Activity and NHS Beds Information" publication.

NHS Lothian has legitimate access to the Scotland data as part of the system used for monitoring NHS targets. This system is maintained by ISD.

Reasons for breach

NHS Lothian was informing their governance Board of progress against a number of targets. NHS Lothian is aware of the restrictions surrounding management information. A chart monitoring performance for the Emergency Bed Days (75+) target, including the 2012/13 Scotland data, was included in error in a Board paper which updated performance reports across a number of different areas.

3. Reactions and impact (both within the producer body and outside)

Impact was minimal; the data was a single section within Board papers that were shared with a small number of trustworthy individuals.

4. Corrective actions taken to prevent reoccurrence of such a breach (include short-term actions, and long-term changes made to procedures)

The Director of Strategic Planning, Performance Reporting & Information for NHS Lothian was alerted to the error immediately and he ensured prompt action to correct the release. Board papers were updated and the chart removed on NHS Lothian website on 25 July and revised version sent to all Board members on the same date, with a request to delete earlier versions.

NHS Lothian have been reminded of the limitations placed on the use of Management Information taken from the performance management system and attention drawn to existing documentation that sets out in detail the information that can and cannot be shared in public documents. The error was due to an isolated oversight and it is not envisaged that this problem would not occur in future.

5. Links to published statements about this breach

ISD publish reports of breaches here:

<http://www.isdscotland.org/About-ISD/About-Our-Statistics/Breaches-and-Exceptions.asp>