

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')

Ambulance Services in Wales: September 2014

www.wales.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/ambulance-services/?lang=en

Name of Producer Organisation

Welsh Government (WG)

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

Glyn Jones, Chief Statistician

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2. Circumstances of breach

Relevant Principle/Protocol and Practice

Protocol 2, Release practice 8.

Ensures 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.

Date of occurrence

23 October 2014

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

On 23 October 2014, BBC Wales reported a headline figure contained within the *Ambulance Services in Wales: September 2014* Statistical First Release, six days ahead of the release's publication: www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-29709842

Reasons for breach

It is unclear where the BBC has sourced the September ambulance figure from.

In accordance with the Pre-release Access to Official Statistics (Wales) Order 2009, a Ministerial Briefing, containing a secure pre-release copy of the Statistical Release, was sent to the Minister for Health and Social Sciences and necessary policy officials at 13:26 on the 22 October 2014. The audit log shows that 9 officials on the list of pre-release access recipients accessed the briefing. Those officials have confirmed that they did not pass the information to anyone else. The Welsh Ambulance Service Trust (WAST) has also confirmed that they did not share this information.

Ambulance services official statistics are derived from management information summarising the performance of WAST. This management information is accessible to a wide range of NHS, WAST and Welsh Government staff, to assist with the day to day operation of the ambulance service. This makes identifying the source of the breach very difficult.

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

The BBC article was the lead story for much of the day but mainly due to the fact that the Interim Chief Executive of WAST was being interviewed by the media for the first time. Both the Welsh Ambulance Service Trust and Welsh Government were asked to comment on the story. Neither WAST nor WG commented directly on the figures that the BBC had obtained.

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

Short-term

The Chief Statistician has written to the Deputy Chief Executive of NHS Wales, in the Welsh Government and the interim Chief Executive of WAST on 6 November 2014 reminding them of requirements of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics and that the message should be reinforced within their organisations.

WAST have added the following text to the management information systems which others can access 'The Information contained within this Website / Document is for internal NHS Wales including Welsh Government and Public Health Wales only and as such should not be reproduced in any way and is not permitted for general release.'

Long-term

Given the necessary access to the management information for operational reasons, we are working with WAST to bring forward our plans to review how we publish this information (as

outlined in our consultation on [proposals concerning the publication of official statistics](#) earlier in the year) to seek a more timely process. Officials in Welsh Government and WAST met on 2 December 2014 to discuss this. Welsh Government are currently working on detailed proposals, for users to comment prior to any change in reporting methods.

5. Links to published statements about this breach

Once published, a link to the breach report will be put on the relevant page of the Welsh Government website (see link in Section 1).