

BREACH OF THE CODE OF PRACTICE FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS

A breach of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics occurs where one or more provisions of the Code were not followed in situations where an exemption or exception had not been approved by the UK Statistics Authority's Head of Assessment, as required in paragraph (xii) of the Code's preamble. Rules on pre-release access to statistics are covered in the relevant Pre-Release Access to Official Statistics Orders; the Code applies as if it includes these orders.

1 Background Information

Name of Statistical Output (including web link if relevant)

Business Demography, 2011
<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/economy2013/121213/?lang=en>

Name of Producer Organisation

Welsh Government (WG)

Name and contact details of person submitting this report, and date of report

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2 Circumstances of Breach

Relevant Principle/Protocol and Practice

Protocol 2 Practice 4:
Issue statistical releases at the standard time of 09:30 on a weekday, to maintain consistency and to permit time for users to understand and respond to the information during normal working hours.

Date of occurrence

29 January 2013

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

The bulletin was not published at 09:30 due to technical issues following an update to our publishing servers.

Reasons for breach

The already published webpage, to which the statistical release was being added, was “cached” (or locally stored) by our servers. Due to a problem with the servers, there was a delay in refreshing the out-of-date cached webpage. This resulted in the statistical release not being published until 10.20.

3 Reactions and Impact

No reaction from users was received.

4 Corrective Actions Taken (include short-term actions, and long-term changes made to procedures)

It was recognised immediately that the webpage had failed to update, to include the link to the bulletin in the “document download” section. The Head of Statistical Policy and the Chief Statistician were alerted to the issue and the central web team were contacted in order to ascertain what was causing the problem. Once it was recognised that the problem would take some time to diagnose, a work-around was devised whereby a new webpage was created containing the bulletin. The existing incomplete webpage was deleted and the URLs linking to the page were updated.

Short-term

The issue affecting the delayed publication of this bulletin relates to the process by which existing webpages are updated at 09.30 to include a link to the document to download (the bulletin). This affects very few of WG’s statistics publications since new webpages are generated for the majority of them. Given it is still unknown exactly why this error occurred; as a precaution, new webpages will now be generated for all statistical publications, to avoid the problem occurring again.

A contingency plan will also be created to ensure staff are aware of the procedures to follow if technical issues result in delayed publication in the future.

Long-term

The statistics section of the WG website is currently undergoing a re-design, with the new site scheduled to be launched in May 2013. The new set-up will provide an improvement to the publication process; the process in which the error occurred will be superseded and hence will no longer be an issue.

5 Any other relevant supporting material (including link to published statements about this breach)

A note has been put on the website indicating that the release was not published on time <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/economy2013/121213/?lang=en>