

## 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)

Community Dental Services in Wales, 2009-10  
<http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/health2010/1012151/?lang=en>

Name of Producer Organisation

Welsh Assembly Government

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

Code of Practice Protocol 2: Release Practices – Practice 7  
...limit access before public release to those people essential for production and publication, and for quality assurance and operational purposes.

Date of occurrence

9 December 2010. We became aware of the breach late afternoon 14 December 2010 (less than 24 hours before publication was due).

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

An email to colleagues with pre-release access informing them and the Minister of the forthcoming release and containing a pre-release copy of the output and briefing for the Minister was forwarded by one of the copy recipients to a number of people outside the Welsh Assembly Government who had not been given pre-release access.

The people receiving the email included four in Public Health Wales, two in Cardiff University and two in the Community Dental Service (NHS). This was despite the email being comprehensively marked as "RESTRICTED STATISTICS" and including a warning about the nature of pre-release access under the Code of Practice, instructions not to forward or divulge the contents to anyone and to contact the originator if circumstances should arise where an additional colleague should require pre-release access.

Reasons for breach

The email was forwarded inadvertently.

**3 Reactions and Impact**

There is no evidence that the inadvertent release has been read by anyone other than those stated above, leaked into the public domain or has compromised the official release (planned for 15 December 2010).

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

Immediate actions taken: as soon as the breach was discovered the colleague who had forwarded the email was contacted. Those who had wrongly received the email were also contacted and asked to delete the email and not to forward on any further. Most quickly confirmed that they had done as requested. In my capacity as Deputy Head of Profession I have written formally to the colleague concerned.

No further action is required at this stage. The colleague was fully aware of the rules and I am assured that this was a one off mistake. I have informed the colleague in question that any further breach will result in the privilege being removed.

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

None