

## 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)

Comparison of UK and EU at-risk-of-poverty rates - 2005-2010  
<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/household-income/comparison-of-uk-and-eu-at-risk-of-poverty-rates/2005-2010/index.html>

Name of Producer Organisation

Office for National Statistics (ONS)

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

Stephen Penneck, Director-General, ONS

### 2 Circumstances of Breach

Relevant Principle/Protocol and Practice

Protocol 2 release practices/Practice 8

Date of occurrence

7 June 2012

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

Release sent out by email to media contacts early at 08:30 by mistake due to human error

## Reasons for breach

The news release content which was part of the Risk of Poverty UK/EU release scheduled for 09:30 publication 7 June 2012 was sent out by the Media Relations Office (MRO) by email at 08:30 to journalists as a result of human error. A member of the team wished to check the release before sending by using the database. In doing so, the individual accidentally selected the wrong button which sent the release. The content that was emailed to journalists contained analysis from the article which should not have been published until 09:30.

### **3 Reactions and Impact**

Minor. No media attention or phone calls received relating to breach. Non-market sensitive release

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

Awareness within the MRO has been increased regarding the sending of the information to the users by disseminating the action taken that led to the human error.

A database system is currently used to send the releases to a list of journalists.

#### **Long term action**

A double action added to the database system where a box has to be ticked before sending is being investigated with the Information Management (IM) team.

#### **Short Term action**

The use of a draft inbox instead of the database (until the fix is in place) to view the release before 09:30 has been disseminated to the team.

The team were reminded how to use the inbox by the controller of the database, in particular the individual that committed the error.