

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')

[Creative industries Economic Estimates Northern Ireland](#)

Name of Producer Organisation

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL)

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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2. Circumstances of breach

Relevant Principle/Protocol and Practice

Protocol 2, practice 7

Date of occurrence

18 June 2014

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

A limited number of senior officials and press office staff in DCAL were copied into a Ministerial submission relating to Creative Industries Economic Estimates publication, under 24 hour pre release access (PRA) conditions.

However, the Senior Press Officer forwarded on the publication to three people from the

Press Offices of two other organisations outside of the Department. One of the organisations circulated the email to another colleague within their organisation. It was then forwarded on again to another person in DCAL without pre release access. In total, five people received the publication who did not have pre release access.

The breach was discovered by the DCAL senior statistician 3 hours after the initial email was issued.

The senior statistician met with the senior press officer to advise them of their obligations and that the email constituted a breach of the pre release access conditions. Senior management in DCAL were also informed as well as the NI Chief Statistician.

Those other persons who had inadvertently received the email were also advised by email at that time that they were now in receipt of official statistics under pre release access conditions and were cautioned regarding any onward transmission.

Reasons for breach

The breach was due to human error on the part of the DCAL official. The individual did not distinguish between those officials who were on the original circulation list and covered by PRA undertakings and those who were not entitled to receive pre release access.

The email from DCAL Research and Statistics Branch clearly stated the pre release nature of the material and that recipients had an obligation not to forward the material or comment on it.

The pre release access email from the senior statistician also highlighted the pre release access conditions.

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

The DCAL official acknowledged the error. No evidence of any other impact in terms of onward transmission or complaints from within or outside the producer body.

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 senior statistician informed DCAL senior management that a breach had occurred and that a report of the breach would be produced.

Details of the breach have been included on the relevant statistics website.

Long term:

Guidance will be re-issued to the person responsible for the breach as well as to other staff who receive pre release access. The guidance will be strengthened to ensure that individuals are aware of the implications of breaching pre release.

5. Links to published statements about this breach

http://www.dcalni.gov.uk/index/quick-links/research_and_statistics-3/official_statistics.htm