

## 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')

- Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) – Monthly Summary Statistics Quarter 3 2014/15 (Oct - Dec)  
<http://www.hscic.gov.uk/catalogue/PUB16793> or from  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/deprivation-of-liberty-safeguards-dols-monthly-summary-statistics-quarter-3-201415-oct-dec--2>

Name of Producer Organisation

- Health and Social Care Information Centre (HSCIC)

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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4 February 2015

### 2. Circumstances of breach

Relevant Principle/Protocol and Practice

- Protocol 2 - Release practices
  - 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

- 3 February 2015

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

- The HSCIC publishes its Official and National Statistics on its website and links to the publication page from [gov.uk](http://gov.uk).
- Because of major technical problems with the HSCIC website's content management system (CMS), the publication did not go live at 09:30.
- On the scheduled announcement on [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) the HSCIC replaced the link to its website with the actual publication documents. However, despite the fact that the process was correctly followed, the announcement did not refresh properly at 09:30 and the publication documents were not made public. Timely technical support was not available from the administrators of the .gov.uk site and the HSCIC was unable to resolve the refresh problem remotely.
- In order to get the publication documents live, the HSCIC team created a new statistical announcement, added the publication documents and forced its publication. This made the publication material available via the .gov.uk site at 10:40, which is 70 minutes late.

Reasons for breach

- The website is made up of different components that run on different servers.
- The initial website outage was caused by an unexpected error in the content management system associated with the way publications are scheduled to go live. This was a very unusual occurrence in a part of the system which until that point had always worked problems; it therefore took some time to identify the issue.
- A problem with the website was initially identified on Monday 2 February 2015. HSCIC ICT technical staff worked through Monday night to re-create the website and its content from back-up files, but it was not possible to re-start the editing components without crashing the whole site. Without access to editing functions, there was no way to add material to the site or to trigger scheduled publications to go live at 09:30 on Tuesday 3 February.
- These problems were resolved later in the day and the publication went live from the HSCIC calendar and also its home page at 12:20.

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

- The Department of Health briefing co-ordinator, who had received the material the previous day, contacted the HSCIC to ask about the delay. No other queries were received regarding the late release.

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

- A root cause investigation discovered an unexpected software error in the content management system (iCM) that caused two parts of the system (the database and the CMS proper) to fail to interface properly. Following the full restoration, re-synchronisation and updating of the website, the fixes to address the cause of the problem were implemented by the software suppliers, GOSS. As a result of these software updates, the HSCIC does not anticipate a recurrence of this problem.