

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')

Insolvency Statistics, April to June 2015

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/insolvency-statistics-april-to-june-2015>

Name of Producer Organisation

The Insolvency Service

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

John Perrett (Lead Official for Statistics, Insolvency Service)

020 7291 6858

John.perrett@insolvency.gsi.gov.uk

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2. Circumstances of breach

Relevant Principle/Protocol and Practice

Protocol 2: Release Practices - Practice 4: Issue statistical releases at the standard time of 9.30am 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 July 2015

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

The statistics were due to be released at 09.30 on Tuesday 29 April 2014, but were instead released at 09.38 – a delay of eight minutes.

Reasons for breach

Human error.

The statistics had been correctly scheduled. However, after a corrected version of one of the documents was uploaded (the day before the scheduled release), the wrong button was pressed on the gov.uk system.

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

The delay was noted and reacted to immediately by the statistics and communications teams. It was initially unclear what the problem was as the statistics appeared to be scheduled for a 09.30 release. Publication of the statistics was 'forced' at 09.38.

At least three users were unable to access the statistics at the scheduled time – two from the media, and one insolvency trade association. The content of the statistics was not disclosed to these users until after they were published. Media briefing was conducted by the Press team only after the statistics were published on Gov.uk.

The Insolvency Service Twitter account tweeted a link at 10.08. Internal briefing on the statistics was emailed to colleagues at 09.43.

Some individuals had greater than 24 hours' pre-release access to the statistics, as the embargoed statistics were only shared after 09.32 on 28 July – this was still less than 24 hours prior to the time set for publication as laid out in paragraph 4 of the Schedule to the Pre-Release Access to Official Statistics Order 2008. There was no known disclosure of the statistics by these individuals prior to publication.

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

Those with access to the gov.uk system will refresh their training. This will cover what needs to happen if a change is made to a document that is scheduled for publication. Government Digital Service has advised that if such changes are made, the release would need to be 'unscheduled' before being scheduled again.