

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)

Monthly Iraq and Afghanistan UK Patient Treatment Statistics:
Royal Centre for Defence Medicine (RCDM) and Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre – Headley Court (DMRC), 8 October 2007 – 28 February 2010
www.dasa.mod.uk

Name of Producer Organisation

Defence Analytical Services and Advice (DASA)

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

Ian Gouldbourne, Head of Profession for Statistics, Ministry of Defence

2 Circumstances of Breach

Relevant Principle/Protocol and Practice(s)

Information was released before the official release date.
Protocol 2: Release practices
Practice 7: Subject to compliance with the rules and principles on pre-release access set out in legislation, limit access before public release to those people essential for production and publication, and for quality assurance and operational purposes. Publish records of those who have access prior to release.
Practice 8: Ensure that no indication of the substance of a statistical report is made public, or given to the media or any other party not recorded as eligible for access before publication. Report to the National Statistician immediately any accidental or wrongful release, and investigate the circumstances.

Date of occurrence

29th March 2010

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

The breach occurred when a DASA official responsible for sending an internal report which contained information from the Official statistic on the number of patients from Operation TELIC and Operation HERRICK receiving treatment at DMRC Headley Court in February sent the internal report two days early to the Standing Joint Commander (SJC) and 9 staff at DMRC Headley Court. The statistical report is derived from administrative data that the people who had received the table early already had access to, but not in its final form.

Reasons for breach

There is no reason to believe that this was anything other than an honest mistake by the DASA official concerned.

3 Reactions and Impact

The error was quickly spotted by DASA staff and the message was recalled, 3 of recipients however had already read the report at this point. DASA contacted these individuals and asked them not to use this report in advance of the 31 March 2010.

No lasting impact; information was not used in advance of its official release

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

Desk instructions have been amended to ensure that the date that the internal report can be released is clear.
Line Managers will ensure that the date on each report matches the release date.

5 Link to published statements about this breach

6 Any other relevant supporting material