

## 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')

Monthly museums and gallery visitor statistics - July 2014

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/museums-and-galleries-monthly-visits#pre-release-access>

Name of Producer Organisation

Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS)

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

Tom Knight

Deputy Head of Analysis

4th Floor, 100 Parliament Street, London SW1A 2BQ

[tom.knight@culture.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:tom.knight@culture.gsi.gov.uk)

020 7211 6021

### 2. Circumstances of breach

Relevant Principle/Protocol and Practice

Protocol 2: Release practices

Statistical reports should be released into the public domain in an orderly manner that promotes public confidence and gives equal access to all, subject to relevant legislation.

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.

Date of occurrence

07 August 2014

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

The policy official leading on producing the release and briefing circulated the release at 08:30, one hour before the 24 hour pre-release began.

This particular output is produced within a policy team with oversight from a statistician. This means that the policy lead on the output has access to the data as a producer of the statistics in advance of the 24 hour pre-release period and is responsible for circulating the pre-release email to the named individuals. On this occasion, it is our understanding that the policy team had everything ready to send out the pre-release information on time but unfortunately sent it out 1 hour early in error (i.e. 25 hours before publication instead of 24). Whilst it was sent an hour early, we can confirm that it did only go to individuals on the pre-release list.

Reasons for breach

Human Error - instructions to not circulate the results until 09:30 were not followed.

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

None – the circulation list was internal DCMS policy officials on the pre-release list who would have usually received the restricted data one hour later.

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

Since the report on this breach was submitted we have implemented further actions to avoid any future breaches. These include:

- implementing requirements for all individuals with pre-release access to sign the declaration form (in line with guidance provided). This will be in place for all publications from June onwards
- a member of the statistics team now has a one to one meeting with all new policy leads who are named on pre-release access lists (or involved in production of official statistics)
- updating our documentation relating to compliance with the Code of Practice, which also included a review of our pre-release access processes.

We also continue to issue straightforward guidance with all pre-release materials and a note in the covering email of submissions which is clear about the requirement not to release data to anyone outside the pre-release list in advance of the publication time and date.

**5. Links to published statements about this breach**

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/352593/Pre-release\\_access\\_July\\_2014.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/352593/Pre-release_access_July_2014.pdf)