

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 Op TELIC and Op HERRICK UK Patient Treatment Statistics: RCDM and DMRC Headley Court, 8 October 2007 – 30 July 2012. These are found at: <http://www.dasa.mod.uk/applications/newWeb/www/index.php?page=48&pubType=0&thiscontent=1350&PublishTime=09:30:00&date=2012-09-04&disText=8%20Oct%202007%20-%202031%20Jul%202012&from=listing&topDate=2012-09-04> or by visiting <http://www.dasa.mod.uk/> and selecting 'Other Publications' and 'Health/Medical Statistics'.

Name of Producer Organisation

Defence Analytical Services and Advice (DASA)

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

Simon Mahony, Head of Profession for Statistics (HoP),
Ministry of Defence (MoD)
6 September 2012

2 Circumstances of Breach

Relevant Principle/Protocol and Practice(s)

Protocol 2, Practice 7 - Breach of pre-release access: the information was released to those on the pre-release list prior to the agreed 24-hour pre-release window.

Date of occurrence

30 August 2012

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

DASA sent the UK Patient Treatment Statistics and the associated Ministerial Submission, to policy contacts with pre-release access at around 10:00 on 30 August 2012. This was prior to the agreed 24-hour pre-release access time of 09:30 on 3 September 2012.

The email was recalled at approximately 11:50 on 30 August 2012, and an explanatory email sent to all accounts in receipt of the original email.

Reasons for breach

The breach occurred as a result of errors by DASA Health Information staff regarding the date of the release. DASA Staff failed to check the release date against the official release dates, and had incorrectly presumed an earlier release date. The error was discovered upon submission of the report to DASA web team prior to the publication of the official statistic report on the DASA website.

3 Reactions and Impact

When DASA staff realised what had happened they sought advice from the HoP, who advised that a breach had taken place. DASA staff then contacted the officials concerned noting that a breach had occurred.

There was no adverse 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)

The DASA staff who released the information were reminded by their line manager to ensure the correct release date of official statistics in order to meet the Code of Practice.

The DASA staff involved acknowledge that they failed to adequately check the release date for the publication prior to submission, and now ensure their calendars contain the correct release dates for future reports.

All DASA staff involved in publication of official and national statistics have been reminded of their obligations under the Code of Practice regarding Release Practices.

The officials who had been given access improperly were requested to disregard any information sent, and the communication was recalled where possible.