

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 if relevant)

National Rail Enquiry Service (NRES) <http://www.rail-reg.gov.uk/server/show/nav.1863>

Name of Producer Organisation

Office of Rail Regulation (ORR).

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

Jay Lindop, analysis and research manager, 020 7282 3978 or jay.lindop@orr.gsi.gov.uk

2 Circumstances of Breach

Relevant Principle/Protocol and Practice

Protocol 2, release practices. Practice 8.

Date of occurrence

15 June 2011.

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

NRES data was due to be published on Thursday 16 June. On Wednesday 15 June, when my colleague went to send out the pre-release e-mail, he noticed that the data was already available on our new data portal at individual measure level. The data, while technically not in its final form, could have been aggregated to form the final table. Pre-release rules were therefore breached. The measures had also not been quality assured once they were in their final format, although the underlying data had been checked.

Reasons for breach

A human error meant that the wrong time period was selected and quarter 4 was available on the data portal instead of quarter 3. The data portal was only launched in April and the processes are still 'bedding in', we will therefore be reviewing what went wrong to ensure it doesn't happen again.

3 Reactions and Impact

As soon as we discovered the breach the data was taken off the portal. It had not been quality assured so the tables went on the website the next day as published. There has been no impact or any reactions from anyone outside of the information and analysis team.

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

In the short-term every output which is going to be made public via the data portal will be double checked for human error. In the long-term we are looking at our processes to ensure this doesn't happen again and will likely increase our quality assurance and add another step into the publishing process.

5 Any other relevant supporting material (including link to published statements about this breach)

None.