

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 Op HERRICK UK Patient Treatment Statistics: RCDM and DMRC Headley Court, 8 October 2007 – 31 August 2013. These are found at <http://www.dasa.mod.uk/index.php/publications/health/operational-casualties/patient-treatments-RCDM-and-DMRC-headley-court/2013-08-31>

Name of Producer Organisation

Ministry of Defence-Defence Statistics (Health)

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

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Breach report completed 26 September 2013

2. Circumstances of breach

Relevant Principle/Protocol and Practice

Protocol 2: Release Practices

Practice 7: "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

25 September 2013

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

Defence Statistics (Health) sent the UK Patient Treatment Statistics and the associated Ministerial Submission, to policy contacts with pre-release access (required to provide the briefing for the submission) at around 09:30 on 25 September 2013. This was prior to the agreed 24-hour pre-release access time of 09:30 on 30 September 2013.

Reasons for breach

The breach occurred as a result of errors by Defence Statistics (Health) staff regarding the date of the pre-release access. The breach was a result of a communication breakdown between the chain of Defence Statistics (Health) staff responsible for the publication. The personnel responsible for the production and quality control of the report failed to check the release date against the pre-agreed release calendar prior to the publication of the 24-hour statistical release.

The error was discovered by the web development and publications team prior to the publication of the official statistic report on the Defence Statistics website.

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

Upon discovery of the breach, Defence Statistics (Health) staff contacted the officials concerned noting that a breach had occurred. The pre-release email was recalled at approximately 10:40 on 25 September 2013, and an explanatory email sent to all accounts in receipt of the original email.

At this stage, there has been no adverse impact of the early release internally. There has been no use of these statistics externally.

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

The Defence Statistics (Health) Staff that released the information were made aware of the correct publication and pre-release dates and were reminded to ensure the correct release date of official statistics in order to meet the Code of Practice.

The officials who had been given access improperly were informed of the correct pre-release and external release dates, requested to disregard any information sent and the communication was recalled where possible.

The staff involved will create additional reminders (including wall charts and task list reminders) to help ensure the incorrect date is not utilised in future reports. Additional checks have also been incorporated into the instructions for the production of the report.