

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.

All breach reports are published on the UK Statistics Authority's website and need to explain (clearly and concisely) what happened to cause the breach and what is being/has been done by the statistical Head of Profession (HoP) to ensure the risk of recurrence is minimised.

1. Background information

Name of Statistical Output (including weblink to the relevant output or 'landing page')

Producer Price Inflation sub-indices

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/ppi2/producer-price-index/index.html>

Name of Producer Organisation

Office for National Statistics (ONS)

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

Glen Watson, Director General (DG), ONS
dg@ons.gsi.gov.uk
01633 655252

2. Circumstances of breach

Relevant Principle/Protocol and Practice

Protocol 2 release practices

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

10th, 13th and 16th June 2014

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

- The Producer Price Index (PPI) is currently published on a 2010=100 basis (ie uses weights from 2010). ONS stopped publishing figures on a 2005=100 basis in October of last year but has continued to produce these figures internally for the National Accounts.
- On Tuesday 17th June, it was discovered that data on a 2005=100 basis had been sent out to 3 separate external users. This included data for May 2014 (on a 2005=100 basis) prior to the publication of the May figures on a 2010=100 basis which were due for publication at 9.30am on Tuesday 17th June 2014.
- Figures were incorrectly sent for indices for: Output of manufactured products minus coke and refined petroleum (sent 10th June); Repair and maintenance of ships and boats (sent 13th June); Irridation electromedical and electrotherapeutic equipment (sent 13th June); and Ships and boats (sent 16th June).
- While the May figures on a 2005=100 basis do not match exactly with the figures published in the PPI statistical bulletin, they would give an indication of the movement of the published figures.
- However, the sub-indices would not allow the recipients to construct an estimate of the aggregate PPIs ahead of their release.
- The breach was discovered when the Grade 7 was assisting a team member with a customer query for which data had already been supplied.

Reasons for breach

The figures sent out to users were extracted from an ONS database using the incorrect status. Rather than using the status containing publicly available data only, a status containing all data calculated for the National Accounts was used instead.

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

Figures were sent to three separate external customers. There has been no known negative reaction.

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

Since the breach was discovered shortly after publication, the only immediate action taken was to re-send the figures to the three users so that the figures they held matched those previously published on a 2005=100 basis.

Longer term actions are:

- Improve team understanding of ORCSDB and the data held in each status
- Publish additional data on 2005=100 basis to avoid the need for users to request data

5. Links to published statements about this breach

- *Include a link to information about this breach issued on the departmental website*

6. Any other relevant supporting material