

## 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')

Provisional Monthly Patient Reported Outcome Measures (PROMs) in England - Apr 2014 to Mar 2015, Aug 2015 release (<http://www.hscic.gov.uk/catalogue/PUB17877>)

Finalised Patient Reported Outcome Measures (PROMs) in England - Apr 2013 to Mar 2014 (<http://www.hscic.gov.uk/catalogue/PUB17876>)

Name of Producer Organisation

Health and Social Care Information Centre

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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**14 August 2015**

### 2. Circumstances of breach

Relevant Principle/Protocol and Practice

- Protocol 2 - Release practices
  - Practice 4 - Issue statistical releases at the standard time of 9.30am on a weekday, to maintain consistency and to permit time for users to understand and respond to the information during normal working hours.

Date of occurrence

- 13 August 2015

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

- The HSCIC publishes its Official and National Statistics on its website and links to the publication page from [gov.uk](http://gov.uk).
- Due to operational issues within the HSCIC web content management system (CMS), the publication did not go live at 09:30am.
- On checking this at 9.30am, the Statistical Governance Officer liaised with the web team contact, letting them know that, while the release was publicised on the HSCIC splash page and HSCIC calendar page, the actual publication pages displayed an error.
- The web contact approved the files to go live, and manually re-indexed the site, so the publications would publish as soon as possible.
- The publications went live at 9.40am, which is 10 minutes late.

Reasons for breach

- As part of the publication process, the online document repository has a three stage approval procedure: An officer uploads the files and metadata. Then the responsible statistician provides approval as a manager. Following this, the web team provide comms approval.
- It is thought that this last stage didn't occur, due to human error. Without comms approval, the relevant page will not go live.

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

- The publication team was kept informed at all points and did not report any contact from customers about the issue.

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

- Statistical Governance Officer has recommended implementing an automatic daily reminder in Outlook, so it is less likely that the comms approval stage will be omitted.
- The Digital Communications team is soon to hire numerous content managers, so there will be a larger workforce to carry out these tasks, dramatically reducing the risk of a single point of failure, as was the case with this breach.
- The Head of Profession will liaise with the Head of Digital Communications about possibilities for improving ways of working.