

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')

Quarterly House Price Statistics: <https://www.ros.gov.uk/property-data/property-statistics/quarterly-house-price-statistics>

Name of Producer Organisation

Registers of Scotland

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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2. Circumstances of breach

Relevant Principle/Protocol and Practice

The Quarterly House Price Statistics report was released contrary to Protocol 2 prior to the publication date

Date of occurrence

27 July 2015

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

The Quarterly House Price Statistic report went live on the Registers of Scotland website at 4:10pm on 27 July 2015. The report was not due to be published until 28 July 2015.

The breach was noticed straight away (the live website and the admin screen were open at the same time, so it was possible to see straight away that the report appeared on the live website when it shouldn't have) and the report removed.

The report was live on the website for less than 5 minutes and was not viewed in the time it was online according to website checks.

Reasons for breach

This breach was due to workflow issues within our website management system which have now been rectified. Normally, the workflow processes would prevent publication until approved by our Communication team at the appropriate time for publication. The workflow

processes had been altered in error during administrative updates. This has now been rectified and procedures have been put in place to ensure this does not happen again.

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

The breach only occurred for a matter of minutes, and the report was removed from the website as soon as it was noticed. There has been no reaction from external users of our website so the breach had no impact. The release was then published as normal at 9.30am on 28 July 2015.

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

Registers of Scotland introduced a new website in January and so the processes around uploading data are fairly new and this breach has highlighted that there are some shortcomings in relation to these processes.

The uploading process has been reviewed with our Communications Team and a new guide set up to cover this process. This process will apply to the majority of data uploads to the website. In relation to our official quarterly statistics, however, we have decided to revert to the previous practice that only the Communications Team upload the data at 9.30am on the morning of publication. This practice worked well before the introduction of our new website and so it was felt that reverting to it would give everyone more confidence that there was unlikely to be a reoccurrence of a similar breach.

5. Links to published statements about this breach

<https://www.ros.gov.uk/about-us/news/2015/breach-of-the-code-of-practice-in-relation-to-official-statistics-releases/>

6. Any other relevant supporting material

N/A