

## 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 Personnel Report.

This is a National Statistic

Link to publication:

<http://www.dasa.mod.uk/index.php/publications/personnel/military/quarterly-personnel-report/2014-01-01>

Name of Producer Organisation

Ministry of Defence (MOD)

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 on 28 February 2014.

### 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

Wednesday 12 February 2014.

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

On 12 February 2014, an official in the Defence Media and Communication directorate (DMC) who had authorised pre-release access to the statistics produced an internal note that included some data from the bulletin. That internal note was copied to three individuals who did not have authorised pre-release access. The breach was discovered on 12 February by a member of the statistical team.

There are similarities to a previous breach in 2013, when statistical information was circulated internally to the Department.

Reasons for breach

The official mistakenly included three individuals in an email that contained a pre release figure, and accepted their mistake immediately on being notified. DMC took action to ensure that the figure did not get distributed any further.

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

Upon discovering the breach, the Head of Profession was informed, and Defence Statistics contacted DMC and informed them of the breach. Defence Statistics also contacted the individuals who had received the pre release information and explained the Code of Practice and pre release guidelines, informing them that the data should not be used until after 09:30 on 13 February.

Contact was made with the National Statistician's Office on 13 February 2014 giving a broad outline of the breach.

No statistics were made available outside of MOD.

Since being made aware of the breach the individual in DMC has been given further briefings on Pre release access (both in person and by email).

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

The Head of Profession for Statistics takes responsibility for the following actions:

- The Code of Practice for Official Statistics will be re-emphasised to DMC staff with pre-release access, and the Head of Profession will additionally brief Director DMC on the Code of Practice.
- Formal guidance on handling statistics for DMC staff will be agreed with DMC and circulated to all relevant staff.
- Pre Release lists will be included as an attachment with all future pre release material.

**5. Links to published statements about this breach**

When the breach report is published on the UK Statistics Authority website we will link to it from our website <http://www.dasa.mod.uk>.