

BREACH OF THE CODE OF PRACTICE FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS

A breach of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics occurs where one or more provisions of the Code were not followed in situations where an exemption or exception had not been approved by the UK Statistics Authority's Head of Assessment, as required in paragraph (xii) of the Code's preamble. Rules on pre-release access to statistics are covered in the relevant Pre-Release Access to Official Statistics Orders; the Code applies as if it includes these orders.

1 Background Information

Name of Statistical Output (including web link if relevant)

Scottish GP Patient Experience Survey National Report

Name of Producer Organisation

Scottish Government

Name and contact details of person submitting this report, and date of report

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2 Circumstances of Breach

Relevant Principle/Protocol and Practice

Protocol 2: Release Practices
Practice 7: Subject to compliance with the rules and principles on pre-release access set out in legislation, limit access before public release to those people essential for production and publication, and for quality assurance and operational purposes. Publish records of those who have access prior to release.

Date of occurrence

8/7/2010

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

A group of volunteers from a user group (Measuring Experience Advisory Group) were undertaking quality assurance of a draft version of the national report. One of the volunteers emailed comments on the national report, with the draft national report attached, to the

entire Measuring Experience Group.

Reasons for breach

This breaches protocol 2.7 because people had access to statistics not in their final form that were not on the list of people participating in the quality assurance of these statistics.

3 Reactions and Impact

There has been no impact beyond the people on the Measuring Experience group who were not quality assuring the report having access to it. All members of the group would have been given access to the report had they volunteered to participate in the quality assurance of it. Unfortunately the list of group members used by the volunteer was out of date and contained some people that had recently left the group.

4 Corrective Actions Taken (include short-term actions, and long-term changes made to procedures)

As soon as we became aware of this an email was sent to all members of the Measuring Experience group reminding them that as the national report is an Official Statistics publication, the results should not be shared with anyone else, be used in other documents or be saved in a shared file until after publication.

The person who emailed the draft national report around the entire Measuring Experience group will be reminded of their responsibilities when dealing with statistics not in their final form.

The Office of the Chief Statistician is revising the current guidance on pre-release access for Quality Assurance including the inclusion of a declaration to be signed by QA recipients that clearly outlines their responsibilities.

5 Any other relevant supporting material (including link to published statements about this breach)

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/About/nsbreaches>