

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')

The Northern Ireland Average Prison Population in 2012.

<http://www.dojni.gov.uk/index/statistics-research/stats-research-publications/prison-population/r-s-bulletin-6-2013-the-northern-ireland-average-prison-population-in-2012.htm>

Name of Producer Organisation

Department of Justice for Northern Ireland (DoJNI)

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

Protocol 2, Practice 3

Ensure that all National Statistics can be accessed from the National Statistics Publication Hub.

Date of occurrence

25 July 2013

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

The publication was available on the Department's own website at date and time pre-notified for release. However, it was subsequently discovered that the release had not been uploaded to the publication hub at the same time.

Reasons for breach

The breach was due to an oversight in the branch resulting from an officer without prior experience of producing national statistics publications being unaware of the internal procedures for proper pre-notification to the Hub. On noticing the press release for the publication on the DoJNI intranet on 31 July 2013 and realising that it hadn't been released on the Hub, the Publications Hub Liaison Officer questioned whether it was a National Statistics publication. On establishing that it was, the Publications Hub Liaison Officer queried with Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) Corporate Branch whether this was in fact a breach in terms of Practice 3 of Protocol 2 as this does not explicitly state that publications need to be accessible from the Hub on the day of publication. This point was then referred by NISRA Corporate Branch to the National Statistics Authority for a definitive ruling. A breach was then determined. The publication was subsequently uploaded to the Hub on 1 August 2013.

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

Considered to be minimal as the publication was published on the DoJNI website on the pre-announced date.

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

Additional guidance emphasising the need to publish via the Publication Hub is to be formalised as part of briefing pack for all staff producing Official or National statistics publications in DoJNI.

On discovery, the first corrective action was to arrange for the uploading of the publication to the Hub.