

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)

UK Armed Forces Quarterly Manning Report at 1 October 2010 www.dasa.mod.uk

Name of Producer Organisation

Defence Analytical Services and Advice (DASA)

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

Ian Gouldbourne, Head of Profession for Statistics, Ministry of Defence.
11th November 2010

2 Circumstances of Breach

Relevant Principle/Protocol and Practice(s)

Information was released before the official release date.
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

9th November 2010

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

The breach occurred when one of the Ministry of Defence officials on the pre-release list allowed their new line manager (who is not on the pre-release list) to see the Ministerial Submission as it was being drafted at approx. 1100hrs on the 9th November 2010.

Reasons for breach

An intermediary level of management has been introduced between the MoD official drafting the Ministerial Submission and the Head of the area. Whilst the official drafting the Submission and the Head of the area have pre-release access, the intermediary manager (who is not currently on the pre-release list) saw the draft Ministerial Submission as it was being penned.

3 Reactions and Impact

We are not aware that the breach resulted in any comment or action by officials who should not have received the report prior to its release which prejudiced the publication the following morning. To our knowledge, no-one other than the person mentioned above received any advance information of what the report contained

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

When the breach was brought to DASA's attention (by the intermediary line manager via a phone call), DASA met with the official concerned and intermediary line manager (both of whom were new in role) and explained the breach to them (including providing the intermediary line manager with a copy of the code of practice for official statistics).

DASA are currently considering whether the intermediary line manager requires access to the pre-release QMR publication for future publications and will update the list of personnel with pre-release access as necessary.

5 Link to published statements about this breach

6 Any other relevant supporting material