

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')

UK Official Holdings of Reserves – January 2014
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-official-holdings-of-international-reserves-january-2014>

Name of Producer Organisation

HM Treasury (HMT)

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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6 February 2014

2. Circumstances of breach

Relevant Principle/Protocol and Practice

Protocol 2: Release Practices
Practice 4: "Issue statistical releases at a standard time of 09:30 on a weekday to maintain consistency and to permit time for users to understand and respond to the information during normal working hours".

Date of occurrence

5 February

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

The publication due to go out on 5 February 2013 at 09:30 was not made available until 13:07 on that date, a delay of 3 hours 37 minutes.

Reasons for breach

The Digital Communications Team was under-resourced because of the Tube strike and because of the allocation of staff to other events and did not set in train the process for 09:30 publication. The producer team spotted that the release had not been published at around 11:30 and attempted to alert the Digital Communications team. Because of the lack of resources in this team, it was not until 13:07 that the release was published.

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

We have not been made aware of any adverse reaction to the breach from users. The Bank of England also publishes its latest statistical data on Official Reserves on the same day at 09:30.

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

This is the first time that Treasury Official statistics have not been published at the correct time.

In response to the breach, we have reviewed our arrangements and will be reinforcing the communication arrangements around statistical releases to ensure there is no repeat.

Producer teams will continue to ensure that releases are sent to the Digital Communications Team in good time for publication (at latest 17:00 on the day before publication), flagged with a release time. Digital Communications Team will continue to ensure that emails are sent in acknowledgement and on publication and will also continue ensure that specific resources are allocated to statistical publications on the day of release.