

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')

This report covers the breaches of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, protocol 2, practice 4 (09:30 releases). The report covers the period 1 July 2015 to 30 September 2015 which follows on from the period covered by the previous combined report.

These breaches have occurred because of known technical issues and limitations of the Office for National Statistics (ONS) website and release publication system which have led to delays in publishing. The breaches are being released as a combined report for this period since the root cause for all is the same. However, it should be noted that ONS has notified the UK Statistics Authority when the delays have occurred throughout the period. Other types of breaches of this protocol and practice are reported separately as they occur.

The table in section 2 lists all ONS breaches covered by this report from 1 July 2015 to 30 September 2015.

Name of Producer Organisation

Office for National Statistics (ONS)

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

Guy Goodwin,

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02/11/2015

2. Circumstances of breach

Relevant Principle/Protocol and Practice

Protocol 2 release practices/Practice 4 issue releases at 09:30 - Issue statistical releases at the 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

See table for a full list of outputs and dates

Table of Breaches to Protocol 2, Practice 4 from 1 January – 31 March 2015

	Output	Date of release	Time of release of the statistical bulletin
1	Producer Price Index - June 2015	14/07/15	09:31:06
2	Labour Market Statistics - July 2015	15/07/15	09:29:00 – one component
3	Regional Labour Market Statistics – July 2015	15/07/15	09:32:25
4	Regional Labour Market Statistics – August 2015	12/08/15	09:32:06
5	Regional Labour Market Statistics – September 2015	16/09/15	09:31:55
6	Public Sector Employment – Q2 2015	16/09/15	09:32:54

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

Releases not published at 09:30 on the ONS website.

Reasons for breach

<p>There are a number of factors that have contributed to the breaches listed in this report.</p> <p>The timeliness of any market sensitive publication is not only impacted by the number of other releases scheduled for the same day (which may differ from when the market sensitive release was last published) but there are several other factors that have also impacted timely publishing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 - One component (chart 1.1) within Labour Market Statistics published at 09:29:00. This was fully investigated. Chart download 1.1 failed during its 1st phase publish. This failure was caught by the Tridion IM team, and the item was manually added to the queue to publish at 09:30. Unfortunately the time set was 09:29:56, which when set manually changes itself to 09:29 (ignoring the seconds). This meant that it was published 54 seconds early. However, logs show that the file was not actually accessed until 09.37:26. All the Information Management (IM) team have been made aware any manual publishing should be 09:30. <p>The volume of content and shape of content that is published. Each release is made up of x number of items of differing sizes, complexity etc. Tables and datasets are particularly large and can impact publishing within 59 seconds of 09:30.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3, 4 and 5 - The Labour Market Statistics and Regional Labour Market Statistics releases can have 130+ items, including 50+ tables and datasets, which resulted in the second release being delayed. • 1 - The Producer Price Index release was published behind the Consumer Price Indices release so was delayed due to the high volume of components being published. <p>Publishing data in an orderly and timely manner can also result in several market sensitive releases (with all their associated items) being scheduled for release on the same day, creating queue at 09:30.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 - The large Labour Market Statistics release is usually published ahead of the Regional Labour Market Statistics release. Public Sector Employment was held up in the same queue as Regional Labour Market release in Breach 5. This was due to a high volume of market sensitive releases. <p>Publication times may also be impacted by front-end website load. That is, a popular release</p>
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can generate greater interest and, as users keep clicking URLs, the system resource usage can be increased which can leave less system resources available for publishing.

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

ONS did not receive any customer complaints or comments about the delays, either directly to the team responsible for the release, the Customer Contact Centre, Media Relations Team, or via social media.

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

It has been decided to make no further technical improvements to the ONS website in light of the possibility that these would destabilise the platform. The repetitive, technical breaches included in this report have reached a plateau. We will continue to report any change in the situation.