

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')

Labour Market Briefing, December 2015
<https://www.detini.gov.uk/articles/labour-force-survey>

Name of Producer Organisation

Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP), Economic and Labour Market Statistics (ELMS)

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

Stephen Donnelly, Senior Principal Statistician, Department for Employment and Learning (DEL), 15 December 2015

2. Circumstances of breach

Relevant Principle/Protocol and Practice

Protocol 2 – Release Practices

Date of occurrence

15 December 2015

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

Email circulation list contained the wrong policy official (of same name)

Reasons for breach

An unauthorised person was sent an email and attachment containing embargoed statistics by a statistician.

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

The wrong DEL official was sent an email containing embargoed statistics at 10:07 during the pre-release period. The official had the same surname as the intended recipient and was contacted immediately. The official had opened the email but had not opened the attachment and was requested to delete the email – confirmation of this was received at 10:11. Deletion was from both the mailbox and deleted items folder.

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

With a view to minimising the risk of human error, all staff in the DEL statistical team have been reminded about the importance of the accuracy of PRA release e-mails. Branch procedures have been revised to ensure that the named recipients are double checked prior to issue. The e-mail circulation list has also been standardised on a template.

5. Links to published statements about this breach

None

6. Any other relevant supporting material

The official had access to the email for approximately 3 minutes.