

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')

[Public Service Vehicles in Wales, 2014-15](#)

Name of Producer Organisation

Welsh Government

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

Glyn Jones, Chief Statistician

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2. Circumstances of breach

Relevant Principle/Protocol and Practice

Protocol 2, Release Practice 7.

Subject to compliance with the rules and principles on pre-release access set out in legislation¹, 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.

¹ [The Pre-release Access to Official Statistics \(Wales\) Order 2009](#) sets out the rules and principles relating to the granting of pre-release access to wholly Welsh devolved statistics.

Date of occurrence

11 January 2016

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

In accordance with the Pre-release Access to Official Statistics (Wales) Order 2009, an email containing a secure pre-release copy of the Statistical Bulletin Public Service Vehicles in Wales, 2014-15, was sent to the pre-release recipient list at 11:30 on 08 January 2016. At 12:34 on 11 January a Welsh Government policy official, who was a pre-release recipient, sent a copy of the pre-release Statistical Bulletin via email to 5 other internal, Welsh Government policy officials. Recipients of this email included officials who were not on the original pre-release recipient list.

Reasons for breach

All our pre-release statistical outputs (this Bulletin included) are saved in a restricted network drive and only those with pre-release access can open these documents. A breach of this nature can only occur if a pre-release recipient disregards the instructions in the covering email and saves a copy of the Bulletin to an unrestricted network drive, thus creating an unrestricted copy of the Bulletin which can then be sent and accessed by non-authorised officials.

The policy official who breached in this instance did so because they believed additional policy officials in their division required pre-release access to the Bulletin. Unfortunately they did not issue a request to the subject statistician for these additional policy officials to be granted pre-release access, as per the instructions in the email.

This breach occurred despite the original covering e-mail clearly marking the bulletin as “official sensitive – statistics” and containing the following text:

“You must not report on the content of the pre-release statistics prior to publication, nor should you give any indication as to whether or not the statistics are likely to be favourable.

You must not forward the pre-release statistics to anyone else (including other staff in the office).

You must not save the pre-release statistics to an unrestricted network drive prior to publication.

If you believe it is appropriate for an additional member of staff to be granted pre-release access to these statistics please email us for consent.”

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

This was a contained, internal, event. Shortly after the email was sent in error, a recipient of that email spotted a typographical error in the Statistical Bulletin and informed the subject statistician of this error. In doing so, the subject statistician was able to identify a breach of pre-release had occurred. The subject statistician immediately informed the Chief Statistician

and Head of Statistical Policy of the breach. He then contacted the policy official who had breached to investigate the circumstances, re-iterate the pre-release access rules and ensure all those who had received the pre-release Bulletin in error deleted it and did not report on its contents to anyone else.

The breach was contained within one policy team within Welsh Government and the official who caused the breach provided written confirmation to the subject statistician stating that the email recipients had not circulated the email any further and all electronic copies had been securely deleted.

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

The Chief Statistician contacted the policy official responsible for the breach ensuring they were fully aware of the rules surrounding pre-release access to official statistics and the correct process through which they can request additional officials be granted pre-release access. The policy official now completely understands their obligations under pre-release access.

5. Links to published statements about this breach

A link to the breach report will be put on the [Public Service Vehicles in Wales, 2014-15](#) webpage when it is published.