

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')

Retail Sales Index

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, Statistical Head of Profession, Office for National Statistics, Government Buildings, Cardiff Road, Newport, NP10 8XG.

22/10/2015

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

22/10/2015

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

A technical issue with the ONS website led to a delay in publishing Retail Sales Index. The technical issue was identified and as a result, the ONS Publishing team were required to manually publish the statistical bulletin. Due to this error the Retail Sales Index was published at 09:32.

Reasons for breach

Technical error - The investigation concluded that the nature of the statistical bulletin failing to publish was as a one-off unexplained technical issue in the publishing system ONS uses –

Tridion, with no specific cause.

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. ONS is focussing on the development of a new website and will continue to report any change to the situation.