

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')

Health Survey for England - 2014 report - new chapters
<http://www.hscic.gov.uk/catalogue/PUB19295>

Name of Producer Organisation

Health and Social Care Information Centre (HSCIC)

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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2. Circumstances of breach

Relevant Principle/Protocol and Practice

Protocol 2 - Release practices:

Practice 4 - 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

15 January 2016

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

- The HSCIC publishes its Official and National Statistics on its website and links to the publication page from gov.uk.
- Because of operational issues within the HSCIC web content management system (CMS), the publication went live earlier than 09:30.
- As standard, the Statistical Governance Officer checks publication pages just before 09:30, both to check they are not yet live and to be well placed to check when publications do go live.
- On this occasion, at 09:26, the “Health Survey for England – extra chapters” publication was already live.
- The Digital Communications team confirmed that this had gone live between 09:20 and 09:25, meaning it was published 5-10 minutes early.

Reasons for breach

The “extra chapters” files were planned additions to an already-live publication. The Digital Communications team colleague, under the belief that these extra files were to go live as soon as possible, pushed them live when re-indexing the site for another publication (at the point of indexing, any files due to be published are sent live). Only later, after discussion with the Statistical Governance Officer, did he realise these files constituted a separate official statistics publication, to go live at exactly 09:30.

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

- The publication team did not report anything awry.
- No customers or colleagues commented on the early publication.

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

- Separate publication folders will be implemented for any extra or “additional analysis” official statistics publications, which will avoid accidental early release due to time stamps on the SharePoint folders.
- This will include publications like this, where the additions sit within a continuous series of chapters. At first instance, the additions will be published as new, separate, publications. After a short time, they will also be included in the main publication. This will prevent the cause of this breach from reoccurring, and should hopefully result in the new content being clearer to the customer.