

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')

Maternity Services Monthly Statistics, England – September and October 2015,
Experimental statistics (<http://www.hscic.gov.uk/catalogue/PUB20144>)

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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02 March 2016

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

02 March 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 did not go live at 09:30.

- On checking at 09:30, the Statistical Governance Officer liaised with the web team contact, letting them know that, while the release was publicised on the HSCIC home page and HSCIC calendar page, the actual publication page displayed an error.
- The publications were confirmed as live on the HSCIC site at 11:35, which is just over two hours late (also see section 4 below regarding the statistics going live on the gov.uk website at 10:00).

Reasons for breach

- As part of the publication process, the website content management system creates a file and a directory to reflect changes to the existing indexed site.
- On this occasion, it would appear the system did not 'push' these changes through. The supplier suggested we run this procedure manually, which fixed the issue, suggesting this was the problem. Confirmation is currently being sought by the Statistical Governance Officer, web team and ICT contact from the supplier.

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

The publication team was kept informed at all points and did not report any contact from customers about the issue.

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

- Long-term change: As mentioned in previous HSCIC breach reports, our entire publication system is being replaced in the near future. This should result in more reliably stable performance.
- Short-term action: Gov.uk went live as scheduled at 09:30 however as it links directly to the HSCIC site the publication was not accessible. While the cause of this was being investigated, the Statistical Governance Officer uploaded the files directly to gov.uk and sent the link to the Responsible Statistician for information and distribution among stakeholders. We also liaised with web team to redirect the HSCIC links to this page: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/maternity-services-monthly-statistics-sep-and-oct-2015> - this went live at 10:00.