

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')

Statistics on Women's Smoking Status at Time of Delivery, England – Quarter 4, 2015-16
(<http://www.hscic.gov.uk/catalogue/PUB20899>)

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

16 June 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.
- Due to human error, the publication did not go live at 09:30.
- On checking at 09:30, the Statistical Governance Officer noted that the HSCIC

publication page was showing as unavailable. The Officer and the Statistical Governance Manager tried to contact several members of the Web Team but it was 09:37 before we could reach anyone.

- Another Statistical Governance Officer received a telephone call from the Department of Health (DH) to report the issue at 09:37.
- The Daily Mail and The Mirror both contacted the HSCIC Media Team just after 09:30 to let them know the publication wasn't live. The Media Team sent them the publication files.
- The Statistical Governance Team began to add the publication files to the GOV.UK site as a contingency.
- The web team fixed the issue and the publication was confirmed as live on the HSCIC site at 09:49, shortly after the Statistical Governance Team added the publication files to the GOV.UK site, and emailed the DH contact.

Reasons for breach

- This breach was down to human error. An individual from the Web Team had added the wrong publication IDs to the URLs.

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

- The DH phoned to report the issue, and later called to confirm it was working to follow up our email.

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

- Short-term action: While the cause of this was being investigated, the Statistical Governance Officer uploaded the files to gov.uk and sent the link to the stakeholder contacts.
- The HSCIC Head of Communications will reiterate the importance to the Web team of double-checking manually created titles and URLs prior to publication.
- The Statistical Governance Team and the Web Team have agreed a plan for contact in case of emergency.