

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')

Statistical Bulletin Quarter 1 2016/17

<http://www.ppsni.gov.uk/Branches/PPSNI/PPSNI/Files/Documents/Stats%20and%20Research/Statistical%20Bulletin%20Quarter%201%202016-17.pdf>

Name of Producer Organisation

Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland

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

25th August 2016

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

The PPS Statistical Bulletin is published quarterly on the PPS website at 09.30 on pre-determined dates. The publication Statistical Bulletin Quarter 1 2016/17 was due to be published at 09.30 on Thursday 25th August 2016 but wasn't actually published until 09.55 on 25th August 2016.

There have not been any previous breaches.

Reasons for breach

PPS Communication Team normally put publications onto the PPS website and have two members of staff with the appropriate authority and access to place publications onto the website. On the day of publication one of these staff was on annual leave and the other was on a training course.

PPS Communication Team were therefore unable to place the Bulletin onto the PPS website and, as per normal, advised the IT Section to complete the process. The IT person with password access to do this was not immediately available as he was attending to an IT problem elsewhere in the building. IT Section put the bulletin onto the website at 09.55 on 25th August. The short term unavailability of IT staff was due to the relocation of staff to a new office address which occurred in the same week that this bulletin was published.

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

On the morning of publication the responsible statistician was kept informed of the slight delay at all times by the PPS Communication Team both prior to and after publication. This is a routine, regular publication, no complaints have been received and there has been no negative impact.

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

This was a very unusual sequence of events which included a major office relocation occurring at the same time. It is the first time it has occurred and very unlikely to happen again. Longer term plans are under consideration where the releases to the PPS website can be timed from the day before.

5. Links to published statements about this breach

<http://www.ppsni.gov.uk/Quarterly-Statistical-Bulletins-7877.html>

6. Any other relevant supporting material