

# REPORTING A BREACH OF THE CODE OF PRACTICE FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS

## 1. Core Information

<b>Title and link to statistical output</b>	Cycling and Walking to/ from Work in Northern Ireland 2015/2016  <a href="https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/articles/walking-and-cycling-0">https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/articles/walking-and-cycling-0</a>
<b>Name of statistical producer</b>	Department for Infrastructure(DfI)
<b>Name and contact details of person dealing with report</b>	Karen Moore Analysis, Statistics and Research Branch, Department for Infrastructure, Clarence Court, 10-18 Adelaide Street, Belfast, BT2 8GB
<b>Link to published statement about the breach (if relevant)</b>	<a href="https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/articles/walking-and-cycling-0">https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/articles/walking-and-cycling-0</a>
<b>Date of report</b>	<b>01/12/16</b>

## 2. Circumstances of breach

<b>Relevant principle/protocol and practice</b>	<b>Protocol 2: Release practices</b> <b>Practice 8</b> “Ensure that no indication of the substance of a statistical report is made public, or given to the media or any other party not recorded as eligible for access before publication. Report to the National Statistician immediately any accidental or wrongful release, and investigate the circumstances”.
<b>Date of occurrence of breach</b>	<b>30/11/16</b>
<p><i>Give an account of what has happened including roles of persons involved, dates, times etc</i></p> <p>A copy of the 'Cycling and Walking to/ from Work in Northern Ireland 2015/2016' publication, with associated Ministerial submission and statistical press release, was issued via email to pre-release access (PRA) recipients on 30 November 2016. These are not considered high profile statistics.</p> <p>The email was sent from a DfI Statistician to the DfI Private Office mailbox and pre-release access recipients were named in the 'cc' list. This included two named press office staff.</p> <p>The subject of the email included 'OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE - embargoed until 9.30am on 1st December'. A note of caution was also included in the body of the email which explained that early access to the information and figures in the release were strictly limited to recipients and should not be shared with anyone else in advance of publication. All of the attachments were also marked 'OFFICIAL SENSITIVE'.</p> <p>After receipt of the email in the DfI Private Office mailbox, a Private Office official acknowledged receipt of the submission at 10.45am on 30 November. In doing so, she forwarded the initial email (with all documents still included) as an attachment to the statistician and 'cc'ed' all original recipients. However, she also 'cc'ed' an additional 5 email addresses, 4 of which were Press Office officials and 1 was the generic Press Office mailbox. Only the 2 Press Office officials named on the PRA list opened the email, all others</p>	

deleted it from their inbox without opening.

On 25 November 2015, a previous breach had occurred relating to the 2014/2015 edition of this publication, again originating from the Departmental Private Office. When acknowledging receipt of the submission from the statistician, a Private Office official had mistakenly forwarded the initial email to a member of staff in another Department with the same name as the statistician. The Breach report is available [here](#).

### **3. Impact of the breach**

*Provide details of the impact of the breach both inside the producer body and externally*

The breach caused by a Private Office official, was contained within the departmental Press Office. The breach did not have any impact on users of the statistics.

All officials who received the email in error deleted it from their mailbox without opening it. This meant that they did not access the statistics during the pre-release period, no press reports were published before the official release and there were no data leaks.

### **4. Corrective actions (taken or planned) to prevent re-occurrence**

*Describe the short-term actions made to redress the situation and the longer term changes to procedures etc*

On learning that the Private Office official had forwarded the original email to persons not on the pre-release access list, I immediately phoned them to explain that I would be reporting this as a breach of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Private Office have been advised to ensure that future pre-release access acknowledgements are sent to the statistician and, if considered necessary, 'cc'ed' only to those named on the pre-release access list. In both cases, the inclusion of the attachments should not be required so they should use 'reply' rather than 'forward'.

The Departmental Senior Statistician has arranged a meeting to discuss pre-release access issues with the G5 who has responsibility for both the Private Office and Press Office This discussion will include potential consequences of further breaches. Following this, staff will be reminded about the correct pre-release access protocol. The Senior Statistician will also request that future PRA submissions are only sent to named individuals and not to a generic mailbox.