

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')

MOD Compensation Claims; financial year 2014/15

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/mod-compensation-claims-financial-year-201415>

Name of Producer Organisation

Ministry of Defence (MOD)

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

Chief Statistician
Ministry of Defence
Main Building | Whitehall
London | SW1A 2HB
Tel: 020 7218 1466
E-mail : DefStrat-Stat-ChiefStatistician@mod.uk

2. Circumstances of breach

Relevant Principle/Protocol and Practice

Protocol 2 Practice 8: 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.

Date of occurrence

6 June 2016

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

The publication was accidentally sent, by the drafter, to an incorrect Communications (Comms) person who was not on the pre-release access list. They were informed shortly afterwards and deleted the email before reading.

Reasons for breach

There was a last minute change to the publication so the drafter of the report phoned the Comms publication team. After investigation it appears that an incorrect phone number was mistakenly picked from the directory and used. Instead of phoning the publication team number associated with the group email address for publications, the drafter phoned the main Comms number. Neither the person answering nor the drafter realised the mistake and were incorrectly told to email the stats direct to the Comms person manning the phone as the main Comms email box was not monitored. It was the first time the drafter had led on the release or may have realised this was not correct as the publications email box is constantly monitored.

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

No impact. The incorrect Comms recipient of the publication is a well established, frequent and trusted recipient of statistical information and deleted the report without reading as soon as the mistake was realised.

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

The deputy Chief Statistician carried out a full investigation and discovered the issue was mistaken use of the incorrect group box telephone number for main Comms rather than publications. He ran through the reasons this was incorrect with the drafter who realised they had used the wrong phone number by mistake. He also talked to those who answer the main Comms phone number and alerted them that if the phone number is incorrectly used instead of the publication number it is important to direct any pre-release material to the publications team.

There have been no subsequent breaches of this nature or of the Compensation Claims publication.

5. Links to published statements about this breach

Given the relatively minor nature of the breach (internal only and pre-release material was immediately deleted and not compromised) no public statement was made other than reporting immediately to the UK Statistics Authority to publish in due course.

6. Any other relevant supporting material

N/A