

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

## 1. Core Information

<b>Title and link to statistical output</b>	<b>Retail sales in Great Britain: July 2017</b> [National Statistics] <a href="https://www.ons.gov.uk/releases/retailsalesingreatbritainjuly2017">https://www.ons.gov.uk/releases/retailsalesingreatbritainjuly2017</a> <b>Unexplained deaths in infancy, England and Wales: 2015</b> [National Statistics] <a href="https://www.ons.gov.uk/releases/unexplaineddeathsininfancyenglandandwales2015">https://www.ons.gov.uk/releases/unexplaineddeathsininfancyenglandandwales2015</a>
<b>Name of statistical producer</b>	<b>Office for National Statistics</b>
<b>Name and contact details of person dealing with report</b>	Glen Everett, Statistics Head of Profession Office for National Statistics Government Buildings, Cardiff Road, Newport NP10 8XG
<b>Link to published statement about the breach (if relevant)</b>	N/A
<b>Date of report</b>	21 September 2017

## 2. Circumstances of breach

<b>Relevant principle/protocol and practice</b>	<b>Protocol 2 (Practice 4)</b> “Issue statistical releases at the standard time of 9.30am on a weekday, to maintain consistency and to permit time for users to understand and respond to the information during normal working hours.”
<b>Date of occurrence of breach</b>	<b>17<sup>th</sup> August 2017</b>
<p>The statistics were due to be published at 9.30am on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> August 2017.</p> <p>Following an update to the ONS website and web systems, the ONS website was unavailable between 9:30am and 9:34am, resulting in two ONS publications (Retail sales in Great Britain and Unexplained deaths in infancy, England and Wales) being delayed.</p> <p>This issue was caused by an increased spike in internet traffic. This would have normally been absorbed by the caching systems protecting the ONS website, but the way in which the software was set-up resulted in users accessing the servers directly, which temporarily affected the availability of the website.</p> <p>This problem has been promptly rectified by the ONS IT Development team and steps have been taken to improve the testing process around any future cache configuration changes.</p>	

## 3. Impact of the breach

<p>The breach had a minimal impact. The ONS has not received any queries or feedback from users on the issue. No reactions were reported from social media either.</p>
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## 4. Corrective actions (taken or planned) to prevent re-occurrence

<p>Shortly after the breach, short-term actions were promptly implemented to roll back any changes that had impacted on the website. Following further investigations the ONS IT development team produced a technical fix to prevent this issue from occurring again in the future.</p>
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