

REPORTING A BREACH OF THE CODE OF PRACTICE FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS

1. Core Information [\[guidance\]](#)

Title and link to statistical output	Further education and skills: October 2017 https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/further-education-and-skills-october-2017
Name of statistical producer	Department for Education
Name and contact details of person dealing with report	Mike Jones – Deputy HoP – 0783 348 4201
Link to published statement about the breach (if relevant)	n/a
Date of report	13 October 2017

2. Circumstances of breach [\[guidance\]](#)

Relevant principle/protocol and practice	Protocol 2, principle 7
Date of occurrence of breach	11 October 2017
<p><i>During the run up to the release a number of policy and ministerial meetings took place to discuss Apprenticeship policy using the latest MI available. These discussions also captured the government public position and a narrative document was drafted with gaps to drop in numbers on pre-release day. At the same time, there was a change in DfE press office lead for FE and apprenticeships.</i></p> <p><i>On PRA day (11 October 2017), a member of apprenticeships comms, who had PRA, dropped figures from the embargoed statistics into the narrative document. This was then shared with a subgroup of the PRA list (press office colleagues, statistics team, and a couple of policy leads involved) for clearance. This email contained the same warning text as the original email sent by the production team.</i></p> <p><i>The new lead from DfE press office for the publication, who was on the PRA list then sent on this narrative document to further colleagues including some who were not on the PRA list (4 within press office, the PPS to SoS, and CEO of the ESFA (The funding agency overseeing MI and operations for FE and would already have seen the data for operational reasons) at 19:05 on 11 October 2017. This email did not contain the same warning text. The statistics team leader was copied in at this point but only saw the email at around 09:15 on 12 October 2017. The team leader emailed the comms person who had shared the document to check who the individuals were and why they had been included. He confirmed this was for sign off within press office and to make those who may need to know aware of lines to take.</i></p>	

3. Impact of the breach [\[guidance\]](#)

<p><i>Six people not on the pre-release access list had access to some of the headline results.</i></p> <p><i>No statistics were released in advance of publication.</i></p>
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4. Corrective actions (taken or planned) to prevent re-occurrence [\[guidance\]](#)

<p><i>The individuals involved have been contacted and reminded of their responsibilities regarding pre-release access, with more clarification on the sign off process under PRA.</i></p> <p><i>HoP is working with Comms colleagues and others to review current process and this will include a clear requirement for the same “health warning” words used by production teams to be included in any further correspondence during the PRA period. This wording itself has</i></p>

been changed to make it clear that figures must not be lifted into non-protected emails during the PRA period. This has been communicated to all statisticians in DfE. A programme of work with comms, policy and private office colleagues is underway to raise awareness and strengthen statistics controls more generally.