

REPORTING A BREACH OF THE CODE OF PRACTICE FOR STATISTICS

1. Core Information

Title and link to statistical output	Adult drinking habits in Great Britain, 2017 (not published until 1/5/18)
Name of statistical producer	Office for National Statistics
Name and contact details of person dealing with report	Neil Bannister
Link to published statement about the breach (if relevant)	Not applicable
Date of report	20/3/18

2. Circumstances of breach

Relevant pillar, principle and practice	T3 Orderly release T3.4 The circulation of statistics in their final form ahead of their publications should be restricted to eligible recipients ...
Date of occurrence of breach	14/3/18
<p>ONS provided unpublished statistics on alcohol consumption to NHS digital, to be used in their compendium of alcohol data. The statistics were released to NHS digital via a pre-release for third party publication agreement; this agreement allowed provision to four named persons. NHS digital subsequently made a request for an additional person to be added to the list. When the statistics were provided to NHS digital, we made clear that they were restricted and that they couldn't be shared with the additional person until this was signed off.</p> <p>On 14/3/18 we received PowerPoint slides on our data from NHS digital, to be reviewed. In this correspondence the additional person had been accidentally copied in, and therefore possibly saw our data without prior agreement.</p>	

3. Impact of the breach

<p><i>Provide details of the impact of the breach both inside the producer body and externally</i></p> <p>This pre-release had very minimal impact: one person received the statistics in error and the breach is only within one analytical team in NHS digital with whom we have a very good working relationship. The impact is in handling the breach and taking steps to reduce future risk.</p> <p>The statistics are widely reported, for example last year in the Telegraph, Guardian, Daily Mail. However, year-on-year changes have not been dramatic and the statistics are not market sensitive.</p> <p>We notified NHS digital of the error on the same day the breach occurred. The additional recipient had not discussed or shared the statistics with others. He will not receive further pre-release access until this has been formally agreed.</p> <p>It was made clear on the pre-release access email that the statistics were restricted, and were only to be seen by the individuals named on the pre-release agreement.</p>
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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

We have applied for the additional person to be added to the pre-release agreement, and waiting for this to be signed off by the ONS Head of Profession.

NHS digital have/will be taking the following steps:

- Remind staff about correct protocol;
- Increased management control of the processes.

In future, we (ONS) will also:

- Strengthen the wording of all text accompanying pre-release material, ensuring that this also applies to the materials derived from the pre-release statistics.