

REPORT OF A BREACH OF THE CODE OF PRACTICE FOR STATISTICS

1. Core Information

Title and link to statistical output	Experience of Crime: Findings from the 2016/17 Northern Ireland Crime Survey https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/research-and-statistical-bulletin-92018-experience-crime-findings-201617-northern-ireland-crime
Name of producer organisation	Department of Justice
Name and contact details of person dealing with report	Gayle Kennedy Gayle.Kennedy@justice-ni.x.gsi.gov.uk Tel: (028) 9072 4522
Link to published statement about the breach (if relevant)	Link will be placed on this page: https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/research-and-statistical-bulletin-92018-experience-crime-findings-201617-northern-ireland-crime
Date of breach report	1 March 2018

2. Circumstances of breach

Relevant principle(s) and practice (s)	Code of Practice: Trustworthiness (T3.6) Statistics should be released to all users at 9.30am on a weekday.
Date of occurrence of breach	28 February 2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DOJ Press Office is responsible for publishing documents online and was due to release the statistical bulletin “Experience of Crime: Findings from the 2016/17 Northern Ireland Crime Survey” at 9.30am on 28 February 2018. • Following normal practices, the relevant DoJ statistician sent an e-mail to DoJ Press Office, at 16.40 on 27 February, with instructions to publish the above bulletin and related material at 9.30am on 28 February. • On return from a meeting, the responsible statistician became aware that the publication was not ‘live’ in the link on the website. She immediately contacted DoJ Press Office to determine the reason for the publication not being placed on the website. • Press Office explained that, due to technical difficulties, they had not been able to upload the PDF document. When this was attempted, an error message of ‘essential maintenance’ was received. IT Assist, the NI Civil Service IT provider, were having a security accreditation check done on their hosted websites. This tied up the servers to the point that some sites came up as ‘under maintenance’ as a default holding message. This would have prevented the publication going live at the given time of 09:30. These are usually yearly checks which other NI Departments are also subject to. As IT Assist also host their websites, this may cause servers to be tied up from time to time. Once the IT issue was resolved, the responsible statistician took immediate action, to address the issue and the report was published within a few minutes (at 11.45am). • The senior statistician was made aware of this breach late afternoon (4pm) as she had been attending various meetings for much of that day. 	

3. Impact of the breach

As the publication was not available at the time of release, notification of the release on social media and to external users was delayed. No known press reports were published before the full release on the DOJ website. No complaints are expected and none have been made to date.

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

Short term actions

- Responsible statistician contacted DoJ Press Office once aware the publication had not gone live and advised that this should have been published at 9.30am. The responsible statistician assisted in the resolution of the technical issue.
- Senior statistician discussed the issue with the Principal Information Officer and the relevant member of staff from Press Office.

Longer term changes

IT Assist plan to increase server numbers to deal with the increasing demand being placed on departmental websites generally. As a consequence, this will reduce the likelihood of servers being tied up and preventing documents going live at 9.30am.

- Hold detailed discussions with Press Office officials on the importance of release practices and to investigate the potential to allow statisticians editorial access to the website, enabling them to upload and publish documents and statistical bulletins.
- Discussion with Press Office before 9.30am on the day of publication to ensure no unforeseen issues have arisen.
- Statisticians to check all links relevant to official statistics publications at 9.30am and address if necessary.
- Hold information sessions for all directorates within DoJ on the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. Initial planning discussions have already taken place to raise awareness of the revised Code of Practice.