

Public confidence in statistics, data and analysis

Ed Humpherson, Director General for Regulation, OSR

May 2018

- Abundant digital information
 - In our lives
 - In the media
 - In our anxieties
- Post-truth & fake news; data rights (TSB, Cambridge Analytica)

Reliable statistics and analysis are a public asset

- The value of this asset can be harmed by:
 - Poor quality
 - Obsolescence
 - Misuse

Regulation of this public asset

- Since 2008, the UK has been one of the very few countries to provide independent regulation of official statistics
- The Code of Practice sets the standards for official statistics

The three pillars

Trustworthiness

People, systems, processes

Honesty & integrity

Independent decision
making

Orderly release

Transparent process &
management

Professional capability

Data governance

Quality

Robust data, method and
statistics

Suitable data sources

Sound methods

Assured quality

Value

Statistics that serve the public
good

Relevance to users

Accessibility

Clarity & insight

Innovation & improvement

Efficiency &
proportionality

Trustworthiness

“Onora O’Neill argued that, rather than aiming to build trust, the task should be to become **trustworthy**—this means demonstrating **competence, honesty and reliability**.”

But you also have to provide **usable evidence that allows others to check whether you are trustworthy**, which necessitates making yourself vulnerable to the other party.”

(Sir David Spiegelhalter)

Quality

Quality – statistics should be the best available measure of what they aim to represent, and should not be materially misleading

Data sources:

Where are the data from and what do they measure?

Methods:

How are the data processed into statistics?

Assurance:

What is the assurance that data are robust and reliable?

Value

..statistics that meet the test of practical utility are to be compiled and made available on an impartial basis by official statistical agencies to honour citizens' entitlement to public information

(UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics)

Relevance to
users

Accessible to all

Clarity and
insight

Innovation

Efficiency

The Code of Practice: Who is it for?

- Beneficiaries:
 - People who use statistics to support decisions and judgements
- Users:
 - Organisations that produce government statistics
 - Users of government statistics
 - Other producers of data and analysis

It provides the foundations for building public confidence

Adopting the Code

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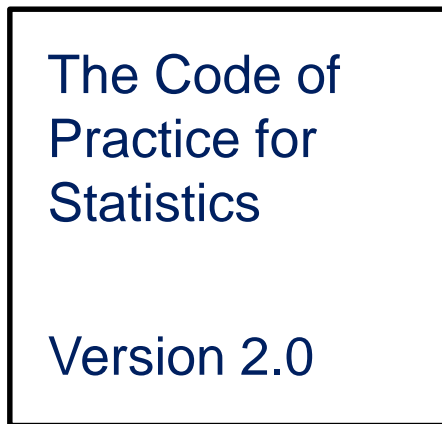
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The three pillars



FULL
COMPLIANCE



Research,
analysis,
management
information, open
data

voluntary
adoption

Voluntary adoption

- Flexible and entirely optional
- Involves **publishing a statement** about why users can be reassured on Trustworthiness, Quality and Value
- In preparing the statement it is helpful to:
 - **understand** the three pillars,
 - **review** the approach to producing and publishing
 - **consider** if there are ways of improving practice

UNDERSTAND

REVIEW

CONSIDER

PUBLISH

The Interactive Code

The screenshot shows a web browser displaying the UK Statistics Authority website. The URL is uksa.helpful.ws/code-of-practice/. The page features the UK Statistics Authority logo and the tagline "Better Statistics, Better Decisions". A navigation menu includes "Home", "About the Authority", "News", "Reports and Correspondence", "Office for Statistics Regulation", and "Code of Practice", with the latter highlighted by a yellow circle. Below the navigation, the breadcrumb "UK Statistics Authority > Introduction" is visible, followed by the main heading "Code of Practice for Statistics" and a search box labeled "Search Code...".

On the left side, a navigation menu lists the following items, with "Code of Practice", "Trustworthiness", "Quality", "Value", "FAQs", "Glossary", and "Helpful resources" circled in red:

- Introduction
 - Code of Practice
 - Trustworthiness
 - Quality
 - Value
 - Voluntary application
- FAQs
- Glossary
- Helpful resources

The main content area is titled "Welcome to the Code of Practice for Statistics" and includes a "Download Code as PDF" button. It contains the following text:

What is the Code?
The Code ensures that the statistics published by Government serve the public. It sets the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value that people and organisations producing official statistics must meet.

What do you want to know about the Code?
This interactive website allows you to explore the pillars, principles and practices of the Code. It

Benefits of voluntary adoption

It shows that an organisation:

- is ethical and honest in using any data
- has a strong culture of professional analysis
- respects evidence
- is open and transparent about the strengths and limitations of its statistics, data and/or analysis
- communicates accurately, clearly and impartially
- is committed to engaging publicly to understand user needs

