

Good Practice in the use of Official Statistics: Guidance for non-statistical staff

Background

The Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 established the UK Statistics Authority and required it to draw up a Code of Practice for official statistics. The Code of Practice was published in January 2009 and provides a statement of good practice to be applied to official statistics in the United Kingdom.

The key points to note are:

- When preparing any publication containing statistics, including those drawn from administrative or management information, you must involve statistical professionals at the earliest opportunity
- You must not use unpublished statistics without the advice of a statistical professional
- You must not selectively quote favourable data from any unpublished dataset
- Decisions taken by statistical professionals are final
- Any publication containing official statistics must provide information relating to their quality, reliability and usability
- Pre-release access to official statistics is a privilege. You must not disclose any information, nor seek to alter it in any way
- Ignoring any of the above may constitute a breach of the Code and result in an investigation by the UK Statistics Authority and a published report to Parliament.

Further Help

If you are unclear about what course of action to take, or with any of the advice provided above:

- Contact your departmental Lead Official for Statistics (see below) or Head of Profession for Statistics (Peter Helm, Defra).
- If you cannot reach them or a deputy you can contact the National Statistician through the Helpline on 020 7014 2350.
- The Code of Practice for Official Statistics is available at <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html>

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