

Standard 3: be transparent

Standard 3 of the [Standards for Official Statistics](#) in the Code of Practice for Statistics describes requirements for the orderly release of official statistics.

The standard is linked to the [Standards for the Public Use of Statistics, Data and Wider Analysis](#) which emphasise the importance of proactively taking an open, clear, and accessible approach to the release and use of data and statistics. This then means that they can be easily accessed, scrutinised and used appropriately. This practice is therefore also relevant to senior leaders and others in the organisation publishing and using official statistics, as well as those producing official statistics.

The Standard:

3. Producers must release the statistics in a transparent way, at a standard time (usually 9.30am), and pre-announce the date and timing of the release so that the public can have confidence in how and when the statistics are released

- 3.1. Pre-announce the release of statistics with the time and date in a 12-month release calendar. Give a specific release date and time four weeks ahead where possible
- 3.2. Agree changes to pre-announced release dates or times with the Chief Statistician/Head of Profession for Statistics and announce promptly, explaining the reasons
- 3.3. Limit access before public release to those involved in the production of the statistics and the preparation of the output, and for quality assurance and operational purposes. Maintain a list of those who have access before the statistics are finalised. Give no public indication of the statistics before release and do not share without prior permission of the Chief Statistician/Head of Profession for Statistics
- 3.4. Act in line with the relevant pre-release access rules and principles set out in legislation when circulating official statistics in their final form
- 3.5. Release on a timely basis, meeting the needs of users as far as possible, and as soon as the statistics are ready under the guidance of the Chief Statistician/Head of Profession for Statistics
- 3.6. Release at the standard time of 9.30am on a weekday unless an alternative release time is agreed with the Director General for Regulation
- 3.7. Advise on the appropriate use of statistics in policy and ministerial statements and ensure links to source statistics are given. Ensure policy and ministerial statements are not included in the release of official statistics

- 3.8. Provide a straightforward way for users to contact the producer team
- 3.9. Release revisions and corrections of errors transparently, as soon as possible in line with the organisation's published policy, being clear about the nature and scale of change
- 3.10. Ensure the status of the statistics is clear in the release – state whether they are accredited official statistics, official statistics or official statistics in development, and if the accreditation has been removed, draw user attention to the loss of accreditation
- 3.11. Be transparent about your approach to the orderly release of statistics in a published release practice policy

Questions to consider:

1. **Announcements:** Do you pre-announce your statistics in a 12-month release calendar, giving a specific release date and time 4 weeks in advance? Are users adequately informed about changes to release schedules? Where a statistics release has permission to be published at an alternative time, does the time best serve the public good?
2. **Restrictions:** How do you ensure those gaining access to pre-published figures handle the information in appropriate ways? Do you limit access to unpublished figures to only those eligible for access? When did you last review your pre-release access list? How do you ensure your teams understand their responsibilities and can adequately respond to any requests for unpublished data?
3. **Contactable:** How do you let users know how to contact the team with enquiries? How do you promote your statistics?
4. **Advice:** How do you support those involved in the communication of policy and ministerial statements to ensure that statistics are appropriately reported?
5. **Revisions and corrections:** When did you last review your policy for revisions and the corrections of errors? Are users appropriately alerted to changes? Have you recently reviewed the frequency and handling of corrections to see if improvements need to be made?

Related guidance:

Office for Statistics Regulation:

- [Alternative release times for official statistics policy](#)
- [Accredited Official Statistics Policy](#)
- [Official Statistics Policy](#)

SHORT GUIDE SERIES

- [Official Statistics in Development policy](#)
- [Regulatory guidance on Intelligent Transparency](#)
- [Understanding the difference between Official Statistics and published Management Information](#)
- [Guidance on producing official statistics in development](#)

Government Statistical Service (GSS):

- [Data sharing for national crisis response](#)
- [Labelling official statistics](#)
- [National Statistician's guidance: management information and official statistics](#)
- [Reporting concerns under the Code of Practice for Statistics](#)
- [Publishing official statistics on polling days](#)
- [Communicating quality, uncertainty and change – section on revisions](#)

UK Statistics Authority:

- [Pre-release access Orders for the UK Government, Wales, Scottish Government and Northern Ireland](#)

Good practice examples:

- Case study – NHS Business Services Authority: [Being transparent and orderly when publishing revisions and corrections](#)
- Case study – Welsh Government: [The secure and effective management of pre-release access](#)
- Blog – Full Fact: [Demonstrating transparency and integrity to support public trust](#)
- Case study – Office for National Statistics: [Effectively Communicating Uncertainty in GDP](#)

Code of Practice for Statistics:

- [Understanding TQV](#)
- [The Code Principles](#)
- [Standards for Official Statistics](#)
- [Standards for the Public Use of Statistics, Data and Wider Analysis](#)
- [Code Guidance](#) – other short guides supporting use of the Code
- [Required policies and statements relating to official statistics production](#)