



Government  
Statistical Service

**NATIONAL  
STATISTICIAN'S  
GUIDANCE:**

**Presentation and  
Publication of  
Official Statistics**



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ISBN 978-1-85774-691-4

### **The National Statistician**

The National Statistician – a statutory office holder – is also the Chief Executive of the UK Statistics Authority Board and the Board's principal adviser on:

- the quality of official statistics
- good practice in relation to official statistics, and
- the comprehensiveness of official statistics

She is also the Head of the Government Statistical Service (GSS) which is a network of professional statisticians and their staff operating both within the Office for National Statistics and across more than 30 other government departments and agencies.

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Last reviewed: August 2009

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# Introduction

**Dame Karen Dunnell DCB  
National Statistician**

Edition 1.0 of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics was published in January 2009. It provides a benchmark of good practice for all bodies producing official statistics. Complying with the Code will help provide assurance that official statistics have been produced to high standards and that they serve the public good. It will also help raise trust and confidence in those statistics.

This supplementary guidance to the Code is intended to help producers of statistics, other officials and ministers to interpret, understand and implement the Code. It should be viewed as supporting documentation and should not be regarded as prescriptive.

It is anticipated that the guidance will be reviewed and updated periodically, in response to experiences of using it as well as to reflect possible updates to the Code itself. Comments on this first edition of the guidance would therefore be most welcome.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen Dunnell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

August 2009

# Objectives

1. This document provides guidance to all producers of official statistics on interpreting and implementing the 'Principles' and 'Practices' in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics which relate to the presentation and publication of official statistics.
2. Compliance with the Code will help ensure that statistical reports are released into the public domain in an orderly manner that promotes public confidence and gives equal access to all, subject to any relevant legislation.
3. This guidance collates the presentation and publication principles and practices into high level themes. To establish the relationship between this guidance and the Code, each section begins with quotations from the relevant principles and practices.
4. Please note that references to the 'Head of Profession for Statistics' are also intended to refer to the equivalent lead official in each organisation.

# Responsibility and organisational policies

## Responsibility

- Principle 3, Practice 2: Ensure that those producing statistical reports are protected from any political pressures that might influence the production or presentation of the statistics.
- Principle 3, Practice 3 (part): Ensure that the relevant statistical Head of Profession has the sole responsibility for deciding on... the content and timing of statistical releases.
- Principle 3, Practice 4 (part): Follow all statutory obligations and internationally endorsed guidelines governing... release.
- Protocol 2, Practice 9: Ensure that government statements issued alongside official statistics, and referring to, or based upon, them:
- a. contain a prominent link to the statistical release and clearly refer to the source of the statistics;
  - b. are labelled clearly as policy statements (or ministerial statements) and are readily distinguished from a statistical release; and
  - c. meet basic professional standards (for example, statistics should be cited accurately, and charts should be drawn in an accurate and impartial way).

5. **Heads of Profession** for Statistics (HoPs) (or the equivalent lead official in an organisation) are professionally accountable for any statements, actions or judgements which impinge on the impartiality and objectivity of official statistics. Seek their guidance as necessary. In turn, HoPs should inform the National Statistician and their own organisation's permanent secretary (or equivalent) if they judge that impartiality and objectivity have been, or might be, compromised by the words or actions of those outside their line of management.
6. HoPs are encouraged to provide prompt information and advice to stakeholders if it becomes necessary to issue clarifications or corrections with respect to the public use, or misuse, of statistics published by their own organisation. HoPs are also encouraged to provide advice, where appropriate, if clarifications or corrections are required with respect to the public use, or misuse, of statistics published by any public bodies sponsored by their organisation.
7. Provide advice on the best professional standards for the presentation of data to ministers or officials who plan to issue ministerial or policy statements on statistics, including the presentation of statistics on an organisation's website. Ensure that such statements contain a link or reference to the original Statistical Release page.

### Organisational policies

- Principle 2, Practice 6 (part): Publish a Revisions Policy for those outputs that are subject to scheduled revisions...
- Principle 8, Practice 7: Manage official statistics in accordance with relevant public records legislation and codes of practice on records management. Deposit official statistics (accompanied by information about their purposes, design and methods) with the relevant national archive as required in legislation.

8. Publish a **revisions policy** which is accessible from the statistical release page and which describes, for example, why and when data are revised. This policy should cover all official statistics subject to scheduled revisions.
9. Data managers should manage their statistics in accordance with the relevant public records legislation and codes of practice on record management. Data and analysis that is likely to be of historical interest, or essential to the analysis of time-series, should be retained in an appropriate archive. Retention policies should take into account potential uses of the data; the historical value of a particular data asset; security implications; the fact that some statistical products exist only on the web, and any cost implications. Where records are held electronically, this should be in a format that is likely to be easily accessible in the foreseeable future, and not dependent on a particular application. Records worthy of permanent preservation including datasets and relevant documentation should be deposited with the relevant national archive.

## Presentation and commentary

Principle 2, Practice 2: Present statistics impartially and objectively.

Principle 8, Practice 2: Prepare and disseminate commentary and analysis that aid interpretation, and provide factual information about the policy or operational context of official statistics. Adopt formats for the presentation of statistics in graphs, tables and maps that enhance clarity, interpretability and consistency.

10. Statistical producers should present statistical content such as commentary, tables and graphs **impartially**, that is, in a manner which avoids appearing to favour a particular viewpoint.
11. Ensure that key messages, such as those describing what the statistics are saying about the economy or society, are presented **clearly**. Attempt to achieve **balance** in commentary and other analysis.
12. Statistical content and analysis should aim to be helpful to users, and aid interpretation and further use of the information, notably by the inclusion of full and impartial **commentary**.
13. Explain the key impact of revisions, for example, 'Revised figures show a 0.5 per cent increase in workforce in Q3 2008 compared to the previous quarter, while provisional figures showed a 0.7 per cent increase', but avoid lengthy accounts of every minor change to previously published figures.
14. The presentation of official statistics and analysis should, as far as possible, be consistent with **good practice** and accepted methodologies. Consult good practice guides such as *Plain Figures*<sup>1</sup> and organisational style guides, including guidance on best web presentation. Statistical releases should also follow good practice in accessibility and ensure the information is available to the widest possible audience.

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1 Plain Figures, Myra Chapman and Cathy Wykes (Stationery Office 1996, 2nd edition)

15. The **style and content** of statistical reports should be balanced and impartial, and meet the needs of user communities, as set out in paragraphs 10 to 14. This means that statistical releases should include:
  - clear identification of the statistics being released
  - commentary that is helpful and presents key messages
  - commentary that is objective, balanced and professionally sound, and that discusses the statistics in the context of their likely uses
  - readily available metadata about the statistics in the release, or details of where to find it, as well as underlying data where this is available
  - statistical presentation that is professional and helpful, and which follows any guidance on good practice issued by the National Statistician
16. Avoid giving stakeholders a surprise when it comes to content, format and timing. Consider the needs of a range of stakeholders (for example, 'expert' and 'inexperienced' users), consulting as appropriate. In doing so, use standard formats for presentation that, as far as possible, permit consistent comparisons over time, while allowing flexibility to explain or depict important new concepts and trends.
17. Seek external **quality assurance**, for example from policy or academic experts, and peer review, where this will add value to the statistical release, ensuring that editorial control is retained by statistical professionals. Any external assurance must take into account the requirements of pre-release access and the need to treat any information obtained in this way as restricted. A suggested form of words to use when sending any unpublished statistics for external review is provided at Annex A.
18. The **content** of all statistical releases should be reviewed regularly by statistics producers to ensure that releases are still relevant and fit for planned purpose.

# Accessibility

Principle 2, Practice 3: Make official statistics equally available to all, subject to statutory provisions for pre-release access.

Principle 8, Practice 3: Make statistics available in as much detail as is reliable and practicable, subject to legal and confidentiality constraints, offering choice and flexibility in the format according to the level of detail required by the user.

Principle 8, Practice 4: Publicise official statistics in ways that enable users to identify and access information relevant to their needs. Make access to official statistics as straightforward as possible by providing easy-to-use entry points.

Principle 8, Practice 5: Ensure that official statistics are disseminated in forms that, as far as possible, are accessible to a range of different audiences, including those with disabilities.

Principle 8, Practice 6: Ensure that official statistics are disseminated in forms that enable and encourage analysis and re-use. Release datasets and reference databases, supported by documentation, in formats that are convenient to users.

19. Accessibility relates both to making information clear and accessible to all users, not just expert users, and to ensuring that the special needs of users with particular impairments are, as far as possible, taken into account when developing websites and publications. Further guidance on the accessibility, usability and design of websites is available from the Central Office of Information<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Web standards and guidelines – [www.coi.gov.uk/guidance.php?page=188](http://www.coi.gov.uk/guidance.php?page=188)

20. Provide **underlying data** to the public and stakeholders in formats that are convenient to the widest range of users and in a manner that is impartial and consistent with the public good. The release of detailed data must not contravene laws or guidance relating to confidentiality – such as Principle 5 in the Code<sup>3</sup>. Avoid the selective release of detailed data which might be interpreted as favouring specific stakeholders. Include supporting documentation that will aid user understanding of the data and ensure users are informed of known limitations to the data or known areas of weakness.

## Pre-release access

Protocol 2, Practice 7: Subject to compliance with the rules and principles on pre-release access set out in legislation, limit access before public release to those people essential for production and publication, and for quality assurance and operational purposes. Publish records of those who have access prior to release.

Protocol 2, Practice 8: Ensure that no indication of the substance of a statistical report is made public, or given to the media or any other party not recorded as eligible for access before publication. Report to the National Statistician immediately any accidental or wrongful release, and investigate the circumstances.

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<sup>3</sup> For further guidance on this please refer to the *National Statistician's Guidance: Confidentiality of Official Statistics*.

21. Statistical producers must restrict **access to first releases of official statistics prior to their publication** to those persons essential to their production, analysis, and publication or for quality assurance purposes, except in those circumstances governed by the statutory rules on pre-release access.
22. **Official statistics in their final form** must only be made available in accordance with the rules and principles on pre-release access set out in the relevant Pre-release Access Order and in line with accompanying guidance on implementation. Published lists of those individuals who have been granted access to official statistics, prior to their release, for briefing purposes should be made available in the form set out in the relevant guidance. Devolved administrations should refer to their own guidance on pre-release access as appropriate.
23. Statistics producers should ensure that no indication of the content in any new release is made public before release, nor given to the media or any other party not recorded as eligible for pre-release access. Any accidental or wrongful release must be reported to the National Statistician or the chief statistician in a devolved administration<sup>4</sup> and an investigation of the circumstances initiated as soon as it becomes known that a wrongful release has occurred.

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4 In most cases, it will also be necessary to report the incident to the permanent secretary responsible for the organisation.

# Publication

## Publication timetable

Principle 1, Practice 4: Publish statistical reports according to a published timetable that takes account of user needs.

Principle 2, Practice 1: Publish statistical reports in an orderly manner, in accordance with Protocol 2.

Protocol 2, Practice 1: Release statistical reports as soon as they are judged ready, so that there is no opportunity, or perception of opportunity, for the release to be withheld or delayed.

Protocol 2, Practice 2: Publish a timetable of statistical releases for twelve months ahead.

Protocol 2, Practice 5: Draw public attention to any change to a pre-announced release date and explain fully the reasons for the change at the same time. The relevant statistical Head of Profession has the final decision and should not be influenced by non-statistical matters.

24. Producers of official statistics should publish statistical releases in an orderly manner, that is, in accordance with Protocol 2 of the Code covering 'Release Practices', and with the guidance provided below.
25. Heads of Profession for statistics must maintain a **schedule of statistical releases** for 12 months ahead and ensure that this planned timetable is amended and kept up to date on the Publication Hub<sup>5</sup> Release Calendar. The schedule for releases should, as far as is possible, take into account user needs identified through formal consultation with users as part of the planning of statistical programmes.

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5 [www.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.statistics.gov.uk)

26. The UK National Statistics Publication Hub is a website bringing together information about releases from across the UK statistical system. It is a central point of access for National Statistics in the UK. Releases continue to be stored on the appropriate organisational websites; the Publication Hub supplies users with a link to where each release can be found on the respective organisational website.
27. The timetable for regular statistical releases should, as a minimum, identify the planned month or two-month window for a release 12 months ahead in order to help users plan their own work drawing on the available statistics. For ad hoc releases that were not known at the time the annual schedule was prepared, the planned date of release should be published as soon as practicable. If it has not been possible to pre-announce a date for any release then an explanation should be provided.
28. The planned **date of release** must be added to the Publication Hub Release Calendar no later than four weeks in advance of the release date, or six months in advance in the case of market sensitive statistics.
29. Publish statistical reports as soon as they are judged ready, taking into account the need to check data and draft commentary, so that there is no opportunity, or perception of opportunity, for the release to be withheld or delayed.
30. When determining release dates, take account of statutory requirements and constraints. Where, for example, the pre-release access limit is 24 hours, it would be inappropriate to choose Monday as the day of release as this would require pre-release recipients to be available on a Sunday. Statistical releases required by statute should only be published when Parliament is sitting.

31. Producers should discuss planned statistical releases with a wide variety of users, and this discussion can take place as part of regular user consultation on the statistics and in other fora<sup>6</sup>. It is also appropriate to discuss the planned timing of a release, to ensure that as far as possible the release date will allow for the uses likely to be made of the statistics, although the actual date of release should not be set on the basis of non-statistical criteria.
32. In some cases it will be desirable to review, across government, the release dates proposed for all of the statistical releases which relate to a common topic and which are due to be published at around the same time (such as within a month of each other). The aim should be to co-ordinate publication arrangements in order to provide a more joined-up and coherent release service to the public. Coherent presentation can involve releasing statistics at the same time, or bringing together related information in a single joint publication.
33. **Changes to the timing** of a pre-announced release (for example, a release date that has been published on the Release Calendar) must be explained to users and, as a minimum, the reason for the change must be entered on the Release Calendar at the same time as the new date. Changes to pre-announced release dates must only be made for technical or statistical reasons and not influenced by non-statistical considerations. The statistical Head of Profession has the final decision on whether a date should be changed and on the wording of the explanation provided.
34. The information held in the Release Calendar and Publication Hub should be checked by the producer of the statistics to ensure that it is correct and up to date. This check should extend beyond the visible information (name and date of release) and should include associated metadata, such as: the 'theme' and 'topic' within which the release should be presented on the Hub, the appropriate statistical source, the producing organisation and editor, the national coverage, and lowest geographic breakdown.

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6 The Statistics Commission report no.39 'Releasing Official Statistics: A Review of Statistical First Releases' (March 2008) provides guidance on the general principles to apply in consulting with users over outputs.

## Releasing statistics

- Principle 2, Practice 4: Announce changes to methods or classifications well in advance of the release of the changed statistics.
- Principle 2, Practice 7: Correct errors discovered in statistical reports, and alert stakeholders, promptly.
- Principle 2, Practice 8: Release all regular statistical reports on the internet without charge to the user.
- Principle 3, Practice 1: Issue statistical reports separately from any other statements or comment about the figures and ensure that no statement or comment – based on prior knowledge – is issued to the press or published ahead of the publication of the statistics.
- Protocol 2, Practice 3: Ensure that all National Statistics can be accessed from the National Statistics Publication Hub.
- Protocol 2, Practice 4: Issue statistical releases at the standard time of 9.30am on a weekday, to maintain consistency and to permit time for users to understand and respond to the information during normal working hours.
- Protocol 2, Practice 6: Include the name and contact details of the responsible statistician in statistical reports.

35. Planned **changes** to content, format, methods and classifications which can be expected to impact on the statistical results presented must be announced as far in advance as possible – ideally within the release which precedes the one being changed. Explain and describe the impact of forthcoming changes including any changes to statistical content generated by changes in economic or social policy.

36. In published statistics, explain **corrections** to errors at the earliest opportunity and in a way that provides most benefit to stakeholders. For example, minor corrections might accompany the next version of the statistical release, while major errors may be separately notified on websites. In some cases, for example where errors could impact on the uses of statistics, stakeholders should be alerted before any corrections are made. If in doubt, consult the Head of Profession.
37. If it proves necessary to correct and re-publish a statistical release, place a note in the new version of the release which explains the reasons for, and the impact of, the correction(s). Point out that the corrected release replaces previous versions, which may have already been accessed by users of the statistics. Avoid confusing users by ensuring that only the corrected data are available, and that superseded releases are removed from websites.
38. Apply professional and value-for-money tests before correcting errors by asking questions such as: 'Are these corrections warranted and important to stakeholders?' or 'Do the benefits of making these corrections outweigh the costs?'
39. Producers of official statistics should publish their statistical releases on public websites **free of charge** and in a manner which maximises their accessibility for diverse audiences.
40. Information on each release supplied to the Publication Hub must include a reference to the appropriate 'theme' and 'topic' within which the release should be included, as well as other metadata required at this stage.
41. A statistical release should be published on the producing organisation's website. The Publication Hub will provide a link to a page on the organisation's own website which provides access to National Statistics releases, but will not publish the release itself. Statistics producers must ensure, therefore, the availability and operability of a link page from the Hub as well as any documents complementary to each release. Organisations should, in turn, provide a link back to the Hub.

42. The initial page for presenting a new statistical release on an organisation's website should be the link supplied to the Publication Hub<sup>7</sup>, and should include all of the recommended content for a standard **Statistical Release page**. This is as follows:
- A version of the agreed strapline clearly stating the responsible producer of the statistics (the producer responsible for their compilation and analysis) and the role of the UK Statistics Authority, the release title and its date of release
  - For National Statistics, the page must include the National Statistics accreditation logo which demonstrates that the statistics have been judged to be Code-compliant. Display of the National Statistics logo must be confined to those statistics that were either labelled as such before commencement of the current statistical legislation or which have been accredited as such after a formal assessment by the UK Statistics Authority
  - A short description of the content or scope of the publication and related products
  - In some cases it will be desirable to include a short bullet-point summary of the key findings reported in the latest statistics
  - Links to the statistical release and any related products published at the same time, including where available the underlying data
  - The national coverage of the release, that is whether the statistics are UK-wide, or for England only, for Scotland, Wales or for Northern Ireland or for any combination of these territories

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<sup>7</sup> The Scottish Government publishes a statistical news release to accompany all official statistics. In the case of the Scottish Government, the information to be included in the 'statistical release page' (as referred to in paragraph 42) will be included in the statistical news release and the statistical publication front page.

- The geographic breakdown available within the latest statistics, for example whether the release provides national totals, regional or local authority breakdowns or any other geography (at its lowest available level) taken from the list of appropriate geographies available in the Publication Hub
  - Links to other relevant information, such as archives of previous reports, related statistical or technical information and the list of people who have been granted privileged access to the statistics in advance of publication (in accordance with the rules governing pre-release access)
  - Contact information for further queries (see also paragraph 51 below)
43. The statistical release page provides a one-stop-shop for both the new statistics themselves and any statistical information related to that release. It provides the necessary 'discovery metadata' enabling users to identify and access information relevant to their needs. The statistical release page should not include any political comment or links to any political pages on an organisation's website, other than to the organisation's statistics homepage.
  44. In many cases, the standard statistical release page will suffice as the mechanism through which a new statistical release is presented to the public and it will not be necessary to issue a separate statistical press notice. Where an additional press notice is required, a link to this press notice should be included on the statistical release page, and the press notice itself should contain a link to the statistical release page.
  45. Official statistics should normally be published at 9.30am on a weekday to ensure consistency and impartiality in the release of statistics and to give users sufficient time to understand and respond to the information during normal working hours.

46. If a statistics producer believes that publishing official statistics at any time other than 9:30 would benefit users, then a request for an exemption must be made to the National Statistician – ideally at least one month in advance of the planned release date – giving the reasons for proposing the change. If it is not possible to seek exemption in advance, the National Statistician should be informed after the event and given a reason for the change of time.
47. Statistical producers should publish first releases of official statistics separately from statements that include any presentation or advocacy of any related policies. First releases should be dedicated to the initial publication of data, whether headline results or full datasets. In all cases, the first release of statistics should follow the principles set out in this guidance. It would not normally be acceptable, therefore, for new statistics to be made available in the first instance through a non-statistical release, such as an organisation’s annual report or in a policy or strategy document. Further analyses of the data can be made available in a subsequent release, for example by inclusion in another publication, on a website, on request, or in response to a Parliamentary Question. If resources allow, it is desirable to make these additional analyses available generally, for example by publication on the organisation’s website.
48. Statistical producers should include a factual statement of **policy context** and the likely use of the statistics where this will help stakeholders, for example if an important purpose of a statistical release is to monitor performance against a policy objective. Although this can be a challenging area, statistical releases and commentary should exclude statements which could be interpreted as political comment; for example comments on whether the statistics show that a particular policy is or is not justified, or whether a policy has been successful. If in doubt, the relevant Head of Profession should be consulted.

49. Where statistical **press notices** are issued, it may be appropriate to seek guidance from press officers on effective presentation to the media. Headlines or text which could be viewed as partial or sensationalist must be avoided. Editorial control over the content and findings reported in statistical press notices is a matter reserved solely for statistical professionals, with the Head of Profession having the final say over the presentation of statistical results.
50. Attempt to achieve balance in the presentation of the data in statistical press notices. Disregard pressure to focus on 'good news' points to satisfy stakeholders, and avoid the temptation to focus on 'bad news' points to maximise media publicity.
51. Wherever possible, the name and contact details of the responsible statistician should be included in the statistical release package. If this is not possible, then the name of the Head of Profession (or the equivalent lead official in an organisation) should be included.

## Published information to accompany statistics

Principle 2, Practice 5: Publish details of any exemption from the practices of the Code, as agreed by the UK Statistics Authority.

Principle 2, Practice 6 (part): ... Provide a statement explaining the nature and extent of revisions at the same time that they are released.

Principle 4, Practice 1: (part): ... Publish details of the methods adopted, including explanations of why particular choices were made.

Principle 4, Practice 6: Promote comparability within the UK and internationally by, for example, adopting common standards, concepts, sampling frames, questions, definitions, statistical units and classifications (including common geographic referencing and coding standards). Make the reasons for any deviations from standard models publicly available.

Principle 8, Practice 1: Provide information on the quality and reliability of statistics in relation to the range of potential uses, and on methods, procedures, and classifications.

52. For National Statistics, and where possible other official statistics, statistical authors should explain any agreed departures from the practices in the Code which impact on the presentation of statistics. Such departures should be cleared at Head of Profession level and Heads of Profession should ensure that the National Statistician is informed.
53. Information on the methods and classifications used in producing official statistics (often referred to as metadata) should be available and accessible from the associated statistical release<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> For further information please refer to the *National Statistician's Guidance: Quality, Methods and Harmonisation*, paragraphs 54 and 55.

54. Information on the quality and reliability of statistics is often presented using quality output measures, with a core set of measures included in first releases<sup>9</sup>.
55. Take care not to obscure key messages with technical detail. In some cases this information may be included in either the statistical news release or the statistical publication itself.
56. For further guidance on the content of published information that should accompany official statistics, please refer to the *National Statistician's Guidance: Quality, Methods and Harmonisation*.

## Pricing

Principle 2, Practice 8: Release all regular statistical reports on the internet without charge to the user.

Principle 2, Practice 9: For any supplementary statistical services for which a charge is made, adopt clear pricing policies that comply with legislation and relevant policy.

57. Pricing should comply with legislation and wider government policy, and provide fair value.

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<sup>9</sup> For further information please refer to the *National Statistician's Guidance: Quality, Methods and Harmonisation*, paragraph 56.

58. As far as possible, the price of official statistics should not be a barrier to access. The key principles are that:
- i. Headline National Statistics outputs and other information of broad and general interest will be free on the Internet
  - ii. Access to underlying data may incur charges where it is likely to be only of specialist interest and to involve extra processing and security measures
  - iii. Where authorised, access to identifiable data may incur a charge for managing any arrangements necessary to protect the confidentiality of the data
  - iv. Pricing for National Statistics products will conform either to legislation and wider government policies, or to an individual organisation's charging policy, whichever is appropriate. Guidelines on charging issued by HM Treasury and (if appropriate) instructions on Crown Copyright issued by HM Stationery Office should also be consulted
59. Publications in print or other physical media will normally be priced to recover no more than the cost of manufacture, marketing and distribution. The publication price will normally exclude the cost of core business activities, including data collection and processing.
60. Tailored data services carried out at the request of a specific non-government user may be charged to recover costs in full, including product development and any dedicated collection and processing. In some cases these services may be charged at a profit, where they are carried out in a commercial environment. Costs may be mitigated where the required data are available, though not published. Costs may be further mitigated, and in some cases the work may be free, where the responsible Head of Profession judges there to be a significant benefit to the UK statistical system, or to the wider community.

# Annex A

## Pre-release Access for Quality Assurance

If unpublished statistics are provided to an external reviewer for quality assurance or peer review it is imperative that the recipient understands that any information disclosed in this way must not be used, quoted or shared with others prior to its official release.

Suggested wording for inclusion in a covering note:

Thank you for agreeing to review the attached statistics. As they are not yet officially released, access to them needs to be carefully managed.

Any information in the attached must not be used, quoted or shared with others prior to its official release. Any accidental or wrongful release must be reported immediately. This includes indications of the content or conclusions, including descriptions such as 'favourable' or 'unfavourable'.

Please prevent inappropriate use by treating this information as either 'Protected' or 'Restricted', as appropriate.