

Code of Practice for Official Statistics

Guidelines for the production of official statistics by Statistics Jersey

Edition 2.0

October 2018

Foreword from the Statistics Users Group

The Statistics Users Group (“the Group”) was established by proposition of the States of Jersey¹ in 1999 as an independent body to oversee the quality, relevance and integrity of the statistics compiled by or on behalf of States' Departments.

The Statistics and Census (Jersey) Law 2018² (“the Law”) gave the Group its own legal foundation. It provides for the constitution of the Statistics Users Group, defines the terms of reference of the Group (Article 4) and its functions (Article 5). These articles state that the Group is independent of government and has the primary function of overseeing the quality, relevance and integrity of statistics compiled by or on behalf of a public authority.

Article 5(4)(a) of the Law requires that the Group publish a Code of Practice for official statistics in Jersey. This code must establish:

- a) principles and practices underlying the production, management and dissemination of official statistics; and
- b) processes governing the release of official statistics and rules relating to the granting of access to those statistics prior to their general release.

The requirements of the Code of Practice for official statistics are specific to those statistics that are produced by Statistics Jersey and have been designated as official statistics by the Group through their inclusion in the Group’s publication schedule. In addition to this Code, the Group has also published separate guidelines that apply to all statistics produced by public authorities in Jersey.

The Group first published a Code of Practice for official statistics in Jersey in May 2015, in order to ensure an independent and professional statistical service for the people of Jersey and for all users of statistical information relating to Jersey. The Code of Practice closely followed that of the United Kingdom³, modified in order to reflect the different organisational structure and scale of the production of official statistics in the two jurisdictions.

This latest edition of the Code of Practice (“the Code”) incorporates modifications resulting from the enactment of the Statistics and Census (Jersey) Law 2018 and also has been updated to reflect recent developments in the field of official statistics. The Code makes specific reference to the separate Code of Practice for Statistics⁴, also published by the Group, which provides more general guidelines for all public authorities in Jersey. The two documents should be read together when considering the standards expected for those measures designated as official statistics by the Group. Producers of official statistics should adhere to both this code and the Code of Practice for Statistics.

¹ [Establishment of a Statistics Users Group \(P.142/99\)](#) (1999).

² The Statistics and Census (Jersey) Law 2018 <https://www.jerseylaw.je/laws/enacted/Pages/L-08-2018.aspx>

³ [UK Statistics Authority: Code of Practice for Official Statistics](#) (2009).

⁴ [Code of Practice for Statistics](#)

Code of Practice for Official Statistics

O1 Official statistics

Official statistics are defined in the Law as statistics that are listed on the publication schedule produced by the Group.

O2 Code of Practice for Statistics

Official statistics must comply with the Code of Practice for Statistics, also published by the Group.

O3 Chief Statistician

The Chief Statistician is the head of practice for Statistics Jersey and the officer responsible for the production of official statistics. The role of the Chief Statistician is defined in the Law.

O4 Designation as official statistics

The Group will, on the advice of the Chief Statistician, assess any such statistics produced by Statistics Jersey for compliance with this code. Statistics that meet these requirements will be listed on the Group's publication schedule as official statistics.

O5 Monitoring of compliance with the code

The Group will monitor compliance with this code by conducting periodic audits of official statistics. The Group may also conduct audits following notification of a potential breach from any public authority, other undertaking or individual. If the Group considers that any official statistics contravene the code, it will direct that such statistics be removed from the next publication schedule.

O6 Pre-release access

Official statistics must comply with the principle of equality of access. Therefore, access before the public release of official statistics should be strictly limited to those individuals directly involved in the production of the statistics and the preparation of the release.

Where there exists a clearly defined operational need for users to be granted access to official statistics before their official publication, this requirement will be assessed and determined by the Group. This assessment will be based on the following principles:

- a) Pre-release access is exceptional and is only granted on the merits of each particular case.
- b) The decisions and conditions determining pre-release access, where it is granted, are those of the Group acting with the advice of the Chief Statistician.
- c) No indication of the substance of a statistical report should be made public or given to any other party without prior permission for pre-release access. Any unauthorised release must be reported to the Group immediately, which will investigate the circumstances.
- d) The Group will determine the period of pre-release access granted.
- e) The Group will withdraw pre-release access from any person or organisation judged to have breached the conditions of their access.
- f) In all circumstances, pre-release access will be conditional on practical and statistical matters, as determined by the Chief Statistician.

Following assessment, the decision of the Group will be published, and a record will be maintained and published of all individuals who have been granted such access, including clear justifications for their access.

O7 Orderly release practices

All official statistics should be released into the public domain in an orderly manner that promotes public confidence and gives equal access to all.

In addition to the practices contained within the statistical standards for public authorities, official statistics shall:

- a) be issued as part of a statistical report on the corresponding pre-announced release date
- b) be issued at the standard release time of 10 a.m.
- c) be made available for access on the States of Jersey website immediately upon release