

REPORT OF EXCEPTION TO THE NATIONAL STATISTICS CODE OF PRACTICE, RELEASE PRACTICES PROTOCOL

Organisation: Department for Work and Pensions.

Relevant document: Release Practices protocol.

Relevant section: Principle 4 paragraph (e).

Exception: Households Below Average Income (HBAI) results for 2006/07 were published on 10 June 2008. Permission has been given to share results with four policy officials in the Joint DWP/DCSF Child Poverty Unit, eight policy officials in the State Pensions Directorate, one policy official from the Parents' Employment Division and six HM Treasury officials in the Work Incentives and Poverty Analysis team, from 27 May 2008, 10 working days in advance of publication. Such an exception has been approved in previous years. We have also shared the results at this point with two senior analysts in the Department for validation purposes.

Reason for exception: The HBAI report is a large and very complex piece of analysis which is used to monitor progress on the joint DWP/HMT PSA target to reduce child poverty. Publication of the results always generates considerable media interest and Ministers are questioned extensively on the results and on their implications for Government policy. The policy analysts given early access have experience of the topic and assist in dealing with queries and preparing briefing during the run up to publication.

Provision for early access for officials, to assist in Ministerial briefing on complex results, is made in DWP's National Statistics Compliance Statement for the Protocol on Release Practices.

Given these circumstances I judged it appropriate to agree to the limited early access requested - noting that Ministers and other advisors remained within the protocol limit of five days pre-release access.

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