



HM Treasury

HM Treasury National Statistics: arrangements for protecting the confidentiality of information used for statistical purposes

HM Treasury's National Statistics are governed by the Code of Practice for Official Statistics¹, as determined and assessed² by the UK Statistics Authority³. Principle 5 of the Code is that "Private information about individual persons (including bodies corporate) compiled in the production of official statistics is confidential, and should be used for statistical purposes only."

Definition

Data are defined as containing confidential information when the information:

- relates to an identifiable entity (including members of the public or corporate organisations);
- is not in the public domain; and
- if disclosed would cause them damage, harm or distress.

Policy

All Treasury staff are required to complete training on Government security Classifications and Responsibility for Information short training packages on Civil Service Learning that outlines the standard rules and procedures that all staff must follow in the handling of sensitive data.

Within the Treasury a number of statisticians produce analyses and compile statistical releases using administrative or statistical data, where some of the data contain confidential information relating to individuals or organisations. All access to and use of these confidential data for statistical purposes is in line with the principles and practices laid out in the Code of Practice. In particular:

- all confidential data for statistics are stored on separate areas of the internal network and access is strictly restricted to a limited number of staff who need it for statistical purposes. These staff undergo the training and sign the declaration described below;

¹ <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/code-of-practice-for-official-statistics.pdf>

² The Treasury's National Statistics outputs were assessed against the requirements of the Code of Practice by the UK Statistics Authority in 2011. The assessment reports for [Public Sector Finances](#) and [Public Spending](#) are available from the Authority's website.

³ <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk>

- all staff involved in the production of statistical analyses and official statistics from datasets that include any confidential data are required to undergo training on the confidentiality aspects of the Code of Practice, and to sign a declaration that they will uphold the principles and practices of the Code including in relation to confidentiality. This declaration is available as an **Annex** to this document; and
- all statistical staff are required to ensure that no confidential information is disclosed in any release of official statistics or underlying data, or in response to any request for further information.

Where requests for information are dealt with under the provisions of the Freedom of Information and Data Protection Acts, then Sections 41 and 43 of the Freedom of Information Act protect information provided in confidence or where release would prejudice commercial interests. The Data Protection Act also protects personal data.

Tom Orford

Head of Profession for Statistics, HM Treasury

Annex: Management information disclosure declaration

Access to management information that will generate National or Official Statistics, prior to the release of those Statistics or that contain confidential or disclosive data

Declaration to be made by any person to be granted access to management information prior to the publication of related official statistics.

1. I require access to management information and similar data for day-to-day production, management/operation or decision-making purposes, in advance of their publication as statistics.
2. I undertake to comply with the following conditions –
 - (i) not to disclose the statistics, confidential data, any part of a publication that includes those statistics, or any suggestion of the size or direction of any trend indicated by those statistics;
 - (ii) not to use this access for personal gain or for any use outside my official functions;
 - (iii) not to use data for the purpose of presenting or defending official policies or to take any action for political advantage; and,
 - (iv) not to use this access to change or compromise the content, presentation or the timing of publication of the statistics.
3. In the event of any doubts about the appropriate use of the management information I shall obtain advice from the Head of Profession for Statistics (Tom Orford).

Signed

Name

Position

Date