
STATES OF JERSEY



CODE OF PRACTICE FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS IN JERSEY

Presented to the States on 21st May 2015
by the Council of Ministers

STATES GREFFE

REPORT

Introduction by the Council of Ministers

The highest quality official statistics produced impartially are essential to the success and good governance of any jurisdiction.

Only in receipt of the highest quality statistics can informed decisions be made about the future of our Island, helping us achieve the goals we set ourselves. No less important, these statistics must be wholly impartial and above reproach, showcasing Jersey as a jurisdiction that is committed to the highest standards.

The Council of Ministers believes that Jersey is excellently served in these areas, with a growing breadth of high quality statistics being produced by the Statistics Unit around the condition of our economy and society.

In recognition of this, the Council of Ministers present the attached Code of Practice on behalf of, and at the request of, the Statistics User Group.

The aim is to create a single document outlining how official statistics work in our Island, clearly stating the absolute importance and inviolability of impartiality and quality when it comes to official statistics.

The Statistics Users Group

The Statistics Users Group (“the Group”) was established by the States of Jersey in 1999 as an independent body to oversee the quality, relevance and integrity of the statistics compiled by or on behalf of States’ Departments¹.

The Statistics Users Group has produced this Code of Practice 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 for Official Statistics in Jersey closely follows that of the United Kingdom², modified in order to reflect the different organisational structure and scale of the production of official statistics in the two jurisdictions.

It is envisaged by the Statistics Users Group that the Code of Practice will evolve over time. Hence, the Group will update the Code of Practice as required.

¹ The role of the Group, its terms of reference and membership procedures are summarised in the Annex to this Code of Practice.

² UK Statistics Authority: Code of Practice for Official Statistics, January 2009.

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS IN JERSEY

Introduction

Official statistics are fundamental to good government, to the delivery of public services and to decision-making in all sectors of society. They provide the States of Jersey and the Public with a picture of society and the economy, and on the work and performance of government.

Observance of a Code of Practice by public bodies that produce official statistics is central to maintaining a professional, independent statistical service that meets the needs of government and society, and is both trustworthy and trusted.

For the purposes of this Code of Practice, ‘official statistics’ are defined as statistics produced by the States of Jersey Statistics Unit.

This Code of Practice is consistent with the United Nations *Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics*³ and the *European Statistics Code of Practice*⁴.

The Code contains 8 principles and, in relation to each, a statement of associated practices. It also contains 2 protocols on the processes governing the release of official statistics and the rules relating to the granting of ‘pre-release’ access to official statistics.

The principles and protocols of the Code of Practice are intended to ensure that –

- the range of statistics produced by the Statistics Unit meets the needs of users;
- the statistics are produced, managed and disseminated to high standards;
- the statistics are clearly and objectively explained by the producers.

Implementation

It is the intention of the Statistics Users Group that this Code of Practice will, in its initial implementation, be applicable to all statistics produced by the Statistics Unit.

In time, other States of Jersey Departments will be encouraged to submit statistics for assessment by the Statistics Users Group as being compliant with this Code of Practice.

Definitions

The Code uses the following terminology –

- *production, management and dissemination of official statistics*
refers to the entire statistical process from the identification of needs, to the decision to collect or compile data, through to providing advice to the user;
- *statistical report*:
means any statistical output, including any associated commentary and metadata.

³ United Nations Statistics Division: *Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics* (2006).

⁴ Eurostat *European Statistics Code of Practice: For national and community statistical authorities* (2005).

Principle 1: Meeting user needs

The production, management and dissemination of official statistics should meet the requirements of informed decision-making by government and the States Assembly as a primary user of official statistics, and also of other providers of public services, businesses, researchers and the Public.

Practices

1. Engage with users of statistics to promote trust and maximise value.
2. Investigate the needs of users of official statistics, the use made of existing statistics and the types of decision they inform.
3. Adopt systematic statistical planning arrangements that reflect the obligation to serve the public good.
4. Publish statistical reports according to a published timetable that takes account of user needs.

Principle 2: Impartiality and objectivity

Official statistics, and information about statistical processes, should be managed impartially and objectively.

Practices

1. Publish statistical reports in an orderly manner, in accordance with Protocol 1.
2. Present statistics impartially and objectively.
3. Make official statistics equally available to all, subject to the pre-release access detailed in Protocol 2.
4. Announce changes to methods or classifications well in advance of the release of the affected statistics.
5. Provide a statement explaining the nature of revisions at the same time that they are released.
6. Correct errors discovered in statistical reports, and alert stakeholders, promptly.
7. Release all regular statistical reports on the Internet without charge to the user.

Principle 3: Integrity

At all stages in the production, management and dissemination of official statistics, the public interest should prevail over organisational, political or personal interests.

Practices

1. Issue statistical reports separately from any other statement 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.
2. Ensure that those producing statistical reports are protected from any political pressures that might influence the production or presentation of the statistics.
3. Follow all statutory obligations and internationally endorsed guidelines governing the collection of data, confidentiality, and release.
4. Inform the Chief Statistician about complaints that relate to professional integrity, quality or standards, whether or not they can be resolved directly.
5. Promote a culture within which statistical experts in government can comment publicly on statistical issues, including the misuse of official statistics.

Principle 4: Sound methods and assured quality

Statistical methods should be consistent with scientific principles and internationally recognised best practices, and be fully documented. Quality should be monitored and assured taking account of internationally agreed practices.

Practices

1. Ensure that official statistics are produced according to scientific principles. Publish details of the methods adopted.
2. Ensure that official statistics are produced to a level of quality that meets users' needs.
3. Seek to achieve continuous improvement in statistical processes by, for example, undertaking regular reviews.
4. Promote comparability internationally by, for example, adopting common standards, concepts, sampling frames, questions, definitions, statistical units and classifications. Make the reasons for any deviations from standard models publicly available.
5. Where time series are revised, or changes are made to methods or coverage, produce consistent historical data where possible.

Principle 5: Confidentiality

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.

Practices

1. Ensure that official statistics do not reveal the identity of an individual or organisation, or any private information relating to them, taking into account other relevant sources of information.
2. Keep confidential information secure. Only permit its use by trained staff who have signed a declaration covering their obligations under this Code.
3. Inform respondents to statistical surveys and censuses how confidentiality will be protected.
4. Ensure that arrangements for confidentiality protection are sufficient to protect the privacy of individual information, but not so restrictive as to limit unduly the practical utility of official statistics. Publish details of such arrangements.
5. In every case where confidential statistical records are exchanged *for statistical purposes* with a third party, prepare written confidentiality protection agreements covering the requirements under this Code. Keep an operational record to detail the manner and purpose of the processing.

Principle 6: Proportionate burden

The cost burden on data suppliers should not be excessive and should be assessed relative to the benefits arising from the use of the statistics.

Practices

1. Seek participation in statistical surveys through informed consent, rather than using statutory powers, wherever possible.
2. Promote statistical purposes actively in the design of administrative systems in order to enhance the statistical potential of administrative records.
3. Consider the costs of proposed new data requirements (to data suppliers) against the potential benefits.
4. Evaluate existing data sources and estimation techniques before undertaking new surveys.

Principle 7: Resources

The resources allocated by the States of Jersey to official statistics activities should, within the broader financial constraints of government expenditure, be sufficient to meet the requirements of this Code and should be used efficiently and effectively.

Practices

1. From the budget allocated to official statistics by the States of Jersey, and through appropriate prioritisation of work programmes by the Chief Statistician, ensure that the designated resources are used appropriately to produce, manage and disseminate official statistics to the standards of this Code.
2. Ensure that records are maintained showing the relationship between the statistical planning process, the work programme, the allocation of resources, and the outcomes.
3. Monitor expenditure against work programmes and demonstrate effective stewardship of resources allocated to statistical work.
4. Seek to balance quality (for example, accuracy and timeliness) against costs (including both costs to government and data suppliers), taking into account the expected uses of the statistics.
5. Ensure that appropriately skilled people are employed in the statistical production process. Use an appropriate competence framework to set the requirements of statistical posts and the development needs of staff, and support staff in developing their statistical, management and subject area knowledge.

Principle 8: Frankness and accessibility

Official statistics, accompanied by full and frank commentary, should be readily accessible to all users

Practices

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

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.
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.
6. Ensure that official statistics are disseminated in forms that enable and encourage analysis and re-use.

Protocol 1 – Release practices

Statistical reports should be released into the public domain in an orderly manner that promotes public confidence and gives equal access to all, subject to relevant legislation.

Practices

1. Release statistical reports as soon as they are judged, by the Chief Statistician, to be ready, so that there is no opportunity, or perception of opportunity, for the release to be withheld or delayed.
2. Publish a timetable of statistical releases for the 12 months ahead in December of each year.
3. Issue each statistical report at the standard time of 00:01 on the corresponding pre-announced release date.
4. Ensure that all official statistics published by the Statistics Unit can be accessed from the States of Jersey website at the standard release time of 00:01.
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 Chief Statistician has the final decision and should not be influenced by non-statistical matters.
6. For years in which elections to the States Assembly are to be held, the timetable for statistical releases will incorporate a moratorium on the release of statistical reports by the Statistics Unit. Such a period will be applied from the first Electoral Assembly (nomination meeting) to the first Monday after Election Day. The Statistics Unit will endeavour to publish statistical reports in a timely manner before any such moratorium, based only on statistical considerations.
7. Subject to the rules and principles on pre-release access set out in Protocol 2, limit access before public release to those people essential for production and publication, and for quality assurance and operational purposes.
8. Ensure that government statements issued alongside official statistics, and referring to, or based upon, them –
 - a. 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).
9. Include departmental contact details in statistical reports.

Protocol 2 – Pre-release access

In order to facilitate meaningful public debate and to permit time for users to understand and respond to the information during normal working hours, statistical reports will be made available to specified individuals and organisations who are not involved in the production of official statistics.

General Principles

1. Pre-release access is exceptional and is only granted on the merits of each particular case.
2. The decisions and conditions determining pre-release access, where it is granted, are those of the Chief Statistician.
3. The Chief Statistician will determine the period of pre-release access granted.
4. The Chief Statistician will withdraw pre-release access from any person or organisation judged to have breached the condition of their access. The Chief Statistician will consider any mitigating circumstances and alter the sanction accordingly.

Practices

5. Publish records of those outside of the statistical production and publication processes who have access prior to release.
6. 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 Chief Statistician immediately any accidental or wrongful release, and investigate the circumstances.

THE STATISTICS USERS GROUP**FUNCTION, STRUCTURE AND APPOINTMENT PROCESS****Function**

The Statistics Users Group (“the Group”) was established by the States of Jersey in 1999 (Proposition P.142/99) as an independent body to oversee the quality, relevance and integrity of the statistics compiled by or on behalf of States’ Departments.

In 2006 the Group reconfirmed its Terms of Reference –

(1) To review and comment upon any official statistics prepared or proposed to be prepared, by or on behalf of the States of Jersey as regards –

- the range of statistics provided;
- the relevance and appropriateness of the statistics to the purposes for which they are used;
- the demands placed upon providers of information, whether it be provided on a voluntary or compulsory basis;
- the confidentiality of information concerning individuals and businesses;
- the methodology by which those statistics are compiled and their resultant accuracy and reliability;
- the independence of the compilation and dissemination process from political or other inappropriate influence; and
- the form and procedures through which statistical information is disseminated.

Drawing upon such expert advice as seems to them appropriate and having regard to the resources required.

(2) To make such recommendations to the Chief Minister as are appropriate.

The Group meets quarterly; its minutes are published on the web-page: <http://www.gov.je/Government/JerseyWorld/StatisticsUnit/AboutStatisticsUnit/Pages/StatisticsUsersGroup.aspx>

Structure and appointments process

The Group consists of –

- a Chairman
- up to 10 regular Members
- the Chief Statistician of the States of Jersey as *ex-officio* Secretary.

The Chairman and Group Members are appointed for a period not exceeding 3 years from the general public and from persons nominated by interested bodies.

In the most recent round of appointments (2012–13) –

- the Chairman was approved by the States Assembly through a Proposition brought by the Chief Minister (P.137/2012), the nominee having been approved by the Jersey Appointments Commission;
- the current 9 Members of the Group were appointed through Ministerial Decision by the Chief Minister, the nominees having been approved by the Jersey Appointments Commission.

For future rounds of appointment to the Group, it has been proposed by the Chief Minister that all nominees (for Chairman and Members) are to be approved by the States Assembly through a Proposition brought by the Council of Ministers, after the nominees have firstly been approved by the Jersey Appointments Commission.

The current membership status of the Group is –

- Chairman: appointed January 2013;
- Members (9): appointed September 2012.

Pre-release access

Statistics Unit: www.gov.je/statistics

Following the general principles and practices specified under Protocol 2 of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics in Jersey, the following recipients will be granted access to the **publications of the States of Jersey Statistics Unit** under the given periods of pre-release access.

Ministers and Senior Officers

The Chief Statistician will endeavour, where practical, to invite specified Ministers, Chief Officers and senior officers to attend statistical briefings. The usual pre-release period of such briefings will be **up to, but not exceeding, 24 hours**.

The Chief Minister, the Minister for Treasury and Resources and their respective Assistant Ministers will be invited to attend all such statistical briefings: Other Ministers and Assistant Ministers will be invited to briefings which relate directly to their area of ministerial responsibility.

The Chief Officer of the Chief Minister's Department and the Treasurer of the States of Jersey will be invited to attend all statistical briefings. Other Chief Officers and senior officers will be invited to briefings which relate directly to their area of responsibility.

States Assembly

All elected Members of the States of Jersey Assembly will be given a usual period of pre-release access to all Statistics Unit publications of **up to, but not exceeding, 12 hours**.

Senior officers

The Corporate Management Board of the States of Jersey will be given a usual period of pre-release access to all Statistics Unit publications of **up to, but not exceeding, 12 hours**.

Media organisations

Journalists representing official media organisations will be given access to statistical releases in order to give them time to absorb and understand the significance of a given release.

The usual period of access for this purpose will be **up to, but not exceeding 12 hours**, and will be **at least one hour less than the pre-release access afforded to States Members**.