

PSNI Statistics Branch

Confidentiality Protection Arrangements

This Statement is issued in conformance with the requirements set out in Principle 5 of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. It requires producers of official statistics to publish transparent guidance on their arrangements for protecting confidential data. The Statement sets out the arrangements the PSNI's Statistics Branch has put in place to:

- Maintain the trust and co-operation of those who own and manage administrative data sources used by us and respondents to our surveys;
- Comply with the relevant legislation, including the Data Protection Act 1998;
- Comply with Principle 5 of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, which states 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"; and
- Maintain the confidentiality of the data we receive, store, process and disseminate.

Arrangements for maintaining the confidentiality of statistical data

The PSNI has its own Data Protection & Information Assurance policies and all staff and systems are subject to regular internal audit. In general:

Physical Security

- a) Data on PSNI systems comply with the high security standards required of all police services in the UK. The Statistics Branch is located within a secure PSNI site with access restricted to one main entrance which is staffed by security guards 24 hours a day. The Statistics Branch's offices within that site all comply with PSNI data protection requirements and operate a 'clear desk' policy with all restricted or confidential documents stored in secure cabinets.

Technical security

- b) Access to the various PSNI IT systems is through terminals located within secure PSNI sites. All staff have their own unique password which only allows them access to the systems that they have been authorised to use and where they have received appropriate training. The PSNI terminals have no disk/CD Rom access and cannot be connected to mobile devices or memory sticks. Lap top computers or other portable devices are not used by Statistics Branch staff.

Staff Training

- c) All staff have received training relating to their obligations under the Data Protection Act. This outlines the key principles behind the data protection and their obligations under the act.
- d) Statisticians within the PSNI's Statistics Branch are seconded from the Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency (NISRA) and have been made aware of the contents of the National Statistician's Guidance 'Confidentiality of Official Statistics'. They have also completed the relevant data protection training both within the Dept of Finance & Personnel and also within PSNI.

Statistical Disclosure Control

When reporting figures or tabular results derived from datasets that could potentially result in the identification of an individual or private information about them, we will adopt disclosure control methods as appropriate. In doing so, we consider three types of disclosure risk in relation to the data about individual persons, or the statistics derived from the data:

- **Identity:** If a person or persons can be identified (by either the persons themselves or someone else) then there is an identity disclosure risk.
- **Attribute:** If confidential information about a person or group of persons is revealed and can be attributed to the person, or each person in the group, then there is an attribute disclosure risk.
- **Residual:** If outputs from the same source, or different sources/databases, can be combined to reveal information about a person or group of persons, then there is a residual disclosure risk.

For each of our statistical and data releases, we will assess the risk of disclosure based on the following:

- Level of aggregation of the data;
- Number of tables produced from each dataset;
- Likelihood of an identification attempt;
- Size of the population; and
- Consequences of disclosure.

To minimise the risk of disclosure and maximise the utility of the statistics in our statistical releases, the PSNI's Statistics Branch use an appropriate combination of statistical disclosure control methodologies including: table design; rounding, primary suppression, and secondary suppression. We may use software for rounding and suppression purposes where feasible. Each of our statistical publications will provide details of the statistical disclosure control method adopted in the publication

Information Assurance

Information Assurance is the confidence that information systems will protect the information they handle and will function as they need to, when they need to, under the control of legitimate users. The PSNI's Information Assurance Unit is responsible for evidencing compliance with HMG Security Policy Framework and the ACPO/ACPOS (Association of Chief Police Officers in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland) Information Systems Community Security Policy.

The PSNI has a series of information assurance standards which provide detailed guidance on the specific information assurance controls and practices that must be adhered to in order to provide the assurance that PSNI information assets are protected and that PSNI information systems are operated and secured in a consistent manner and in compliance with national standards.

Sharing of data with a third party

- a) When we share confidential information for statistical or research purposes with a third party, we will only do so when appropriate written confidentiality protection arrangements are in place covering the requirements of the Data Protection Act and the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. These will be in the form of an information sharing agreement and each such agreement will be approved by the PSNI's Data Protection Unit before any confidential data is shared.
- b) Any transfer of confidential data (once an information sharing agreement is in place) will only take place under the guidance and authorisation of the PSNI's Information Assurance Unit to ensure that all such data transfers are conducted by secure means.

Requests for information

All requests for information will be dealt with in a timely manner. All requests will be treated fairly and without prejudice, taking into account the public interest, the requirements of the Data Protection Act (1998) and Freedom of Information Act (2000). Guidance on the Data Protection and Freedom of Information Acts can be found at the Information Commissioners website at www.ico.gov.uk . You can also make a request for information on the PSNI website at www.psni.police.uk

A copy of the Department's Notification to the Information Commissioner can be found at www.ico.gov.uk under "Register of Data Controllers".

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