

Department of Justice Statistics and Research 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 DOJ's Statistics and Research Branch (SRB) has put in place to:

- Maintain the trust and co-operation of those who own and manage administrative data sources used by SRB and respondents to SRB's 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 Statistics and Research Branch receives, stores, processes and disseminates.

Arrangements for maintaining the confidentiality of statistical data

The DOJ has its own Data Protection policy and information security management systems that are subject to regular internal audit.

In general:

Physical Security

a) Data on DOJ systems comply with the security standards required of all criminal justice bodies. Statistics and Research Branch is located within a secure DOJ site with access restricted to one main entrance using logged entacard access procedures. Offices within that site comply with DOJ data protection requirements and operate a 'clear desk' policy with all restricted or confidential documents stored in appropriately secure cabinets.

Technical security

b) Access to the various DOJ IT systems is through terminals located within secure DOJ 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 DOJ terminals have no disk/CD Rom access and cannot be connected to mobile devices or memory sticks. Any lap top computers or other portable devices which are used by Statistics and Research Branch staff are encrypted and carry no personal information.

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 DOJ have been made aware of the contents of the National Statistician's Guidance 'Confidentiality of Official Statistics'.

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, disclosure control methods will be adopted as appropriate. In doing so, three types of disclosure risk in relation to the data about individual persons, or the statistics derived from the data, will be assessed:

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 statistical and data release, the risk of disclosure will be assessed in respect of the following:

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

To minimise the risk of disclosure and maximise the utility of the statistics in statistical releases, DOJ's Statistics and Research branch use an appropriate combination of statistical disclosure control methodologies including: table design; rounding, primary suppression, and secondary suppression. This may include use software for rounding and suppression purposes as feasible. Each statistical publication will provide details of any statistical disclosure control method adopted in the publication.

Sharing of data with a third party

e) When confidential information is shared by Statistics and Research Branch for statistical or research purposes with a third party, this will only be done 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 DOJ's Information Security unit before any confidential data are shared.

f) Any transfer of confidential data (once an information sharing agreement is in place) will only take place under the guidance and authorisation of the DOJ's Information Security 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. Requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act may be made by completing the online form available on the DOJ website at www.dojni.gov.uk/index/foi/foi-enquiry.htm or through the central Freedom of Information team at

dojfoi@dojni.x.gsi.gov.uk

or

*Freedom of Information
Department of Justice
Annexe A
Dundonald House
Stormont Estate
Belfast
BT4 3SU*

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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