

## **Official Statistics**

### **Statement on data confidentiality**

#### **Introduction**

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority (UKSA) Code of Practice includes eight “principles” which seek to ensure that the range of official statistics meets the needs of users, that the statistics are produced, managed and disseminated to high standards, and that the statistics are well explained. Principle 5, regarding confidentiality of personal data used in the production of statistics, states:

*“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.”*

Practice 4 within this Principle requires the Student Loans Company (SLC) as an Official Statistics producer to:

*“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”.*

This statement explains how the SLC Official Statistics team implements these arrangements.

#### **SLC Security & Information Assurance**

The SLC has a Corporate Security Policy which sets out the principles of:

1. Information Risk Management;
2. The appropriate and cost effective securing of SLC assets;
3. The preservation of confidentiality and integrity of service and information used to deliver student finance services to stakeholders;
4. Physical security controls;
5. Personnel security controls; and
6. Service recovery.

The SLC Official Statistics team is bound by and complies with all those Corporate principles.

## **SLC Official Statistics data confidentiality arrangements**

The data used by SLC for the compilation of Official Statistics is all taken from administrative systems. None of it is obtained via surveys.

Data Mining Analysts who have access to the administrative data for internal reporting functions also have access to produce anonymised summary data aggregated according to the different categories required for the Official Statistics. They extract the summary data into a secure area within the SLC network from where the Official Statistics team pick up the data and analyse it for use in the Official Statistics. No personal data is exposed via this process.

There are cases where data at an individual level may need to be extracted into the secure area: a) to check cases that have “Unknown” values to decide where they should be categorised; b) to analyse all the individual cases using a statistical package to check that the statistical function being used (e.g. average) is statistically robust; c) to join data from two different administrative systems where a required category is in one system but not the other. In all cases this individual data is held in the secure area only and only reference numbers are used – not personal identifiers. Only the summary data is used in the Official Statistics publication itself.