

GSS Guidance on dealing with Special Events

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0. This guidance provides an overview of the principles to apply when dealing with (statistical) Special Events in the GSS. The differences in emphasis and impact of particular events make it impractical to have a single policy, but departments are welcome to translate this into a policy for their own use.

1. Statistical special events are short-term (affecting one or at most a few periods), affect a number of outputs and are recognisable in the data. There is no completely objective definition, and departments can set out variations on this and use judgement (for example on how many outputs have to be affected) as long as these are clearly explained.

2. In line with current best practice, the evolution of a series should be accompanied by appropriate commentary. Statistical special events within departments should trigger some coordination of this commentary across affected outputs.

3. Departments which identify a statistical special event should consider whether other GSS outputs may be affected, and contact other departments to coordinate a response if appropriate.

4. The effect of an event on a particular series should only be quantified where there is a satisfactory evidence base for making an estimate. The movements in a time series will not be sufficient in most circumstances, and there will be a need for additional information.

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