

# Department of Health and NHS England

## Statistical Statement:

### Customer Service and User Engagement

#### The purpose of this document

1. This document describes our commitment to provide a high level of service to all customers of our statistical services and products. It explains how we meet the requirements of Protocol 1 (User engagement) in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

#### User commitment

2. We will publish timely, relevant, high quality statistics in line with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, and in compliance with the Pre-Release Access to Official Statistics Order 2008. Our commitment to the users of our official and national statistics is:
  - To publish our statistics on the time and date pre-announced;
  - To give open and easy-to-use routes to allow users to supply us with their views and opinions;
  - To respond quickly and accurately to any questions or complaints from our users;
  - To consult with users on major developments and changes to our statistical collections, methodologies and outputs;
  - To be transparent when we are unable to meet any of these commitments;
3. This commitment is supported by broader contact and complaints procedures. This includes Customer Service Centres which handle general and routine enquiries. Details are provided at the following links:
  - Department of Health:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-of-health>
  - NHS England: <http://www.england.nhs.uk/contact-us/>

#### Our commitment to Data Suppliers

4. We will endeavour to operate efficiently by placing the minimum load necessary on data providers and by integrating our statistical work across government. We will take good care of all the information provided to us and we will respect the confidentiality of all information which may identify an individual (unless such identification has been notified or agreed in advance). Our Statement on Confidentiality and Disclosure covers this issue in more detail.

#### Our service offer to Users

5. We recognise that different customers have different requirements and we recognise the importance of engaging with the concerns of each customer. For regular users, we recognise the value of long-term relationships. We welcome constructive comments on everything we do to help us improve our service.
6. Where possible, we aim to meet the needs of all users by publishing the right data in the right way, so that users can understand and make use of the statistics we publish. When users request data we aim to understand their requirements

properly, and most are then referred to existing published data. Where required, more detailed data are provided for those users who wish to carry out supplementary analysis themselves.

7. Where relevant, Freedom of Information protocols on charging are applied. In practice this means that we do not charge for provision of **supplementary** statistical services. Either requests are answered without charge or, if the work would incur a disproportionate burden, they are refused and an explanation is given.

### **Service Standards and Complaints**

8. If you get in touch with us, you can expect us to be professional in dealing with your query. We will make every reasonable effort to ensure that you are provided with information that meets your requirements.
9. Sometimes, our service delivery standards will be affected by circumstances beyond our control. And occasionally we make mistakes. When this happens we will apologise and do everything we reasonably can to put things right. If you have a concern about the quality of our service, or the treatment you have received from us, please contact us so we can try to put it right. On receipt of a complaint we will:-
  - Take it seriously;
  - Work to address it promptly, and without favour;
10. If you cannot resolve the problem with the person you have been dealing with, you can make a formal complaint. If you need to make a formal complaint, then please follow our complaints procedures which can be found at the links given in paragraph 3.

### **User Engagement**

11. We take seriously the need to engage with users, both by seeking feedback and comment on individual products and services, and at a strategic level by seeking to understand the range of information requirements about and across a diverse and wide-ranging health and social care system.
12. Neither the Department of Health nor NHS England have a separate Statistics Division or centralised statistics plan. We are only two of a range of producers of health and care statistics in the UK. The needs of users are similarly diverse and wide-ranging. We therefore works through the Official Statistics Theme for Health and Social Care to ensure that the statistical system as a whole is engaging with users, understanding their requirements, and shaping statistical products and services to meet those needs. Central to this is effective engagement with the other producers of health and social care statistics themselves, including devolved administrations, the Office for National Statistics and the Health and Social Care Information Centre.
13. In addition, we have established mechanisms to gather feedback and seek engagement on individual products and services.

14. Our users vary widely and include:

- Department of Health Ministers and officials, e.g. policy makers and performance managers;
- NHS England Chief Executive and Board;
- NHS England clinical and operational staff;
- Clinical Commissioning Groups;
- NHS provider trusts;
- NHS regulators, e.g. Care Quality Commission, Monitor, NHS Trust Development Authority;
- Independent and third sector providers of health and social care;
- Public Health England;
- Local Authorities and other public sector bodies;
- NHS patients;
- General public;
- Parliament;
- Academics and researchers;
- Media and commentators.

15. We recognise that different users have different needs and we address those needs in different ways:

- In the case of internal users within DH and NHS England, engagement will largely take place through regular, direct contact.
- The NHS are key users, as well as suppliers of most of the data we publish. We have a wide range of formal and informal networks to facilitate direct engagement with NHS, and other public bodies, covering their needs as data suppliers and data users. These arrangements are characterised by the establishment of ongoing relationships.
- For the public and other users the main method for accessing our statistics is via our websites. We see engagement with users as an ongoing process and therefore provide mechanisms for users to send feedback at any time.

### **Consultations and formal engagement**

16. Where there are major developments or changes to our statistical products, for example when we propose to stop or change a National Statistic, we will use formal consultation mechanisms.

17. Formal consultations will be carried out in accordance with national guidelines on consultations and will be communicated via our websites. Where appropriate, we will take steps to tell users about the consultation via other existing networks and any direct user communication.

18. We engage directly with representative groups of users, for example the Health Statistics User Group, as well as other stakeholders, including those in the supplier chain.

19. We will respond to every consultation providing a summary of responses and the rationale for our way forward.

## **User engagement statements for individual teams**

20. The commitments in this statement apply to all statistical services areas in DH and NHS England. In some cases, individual statistical teams will choose to publish their own, more specific, statements alongside this overarching one.