

**Statistics at NHSBSA**  
**Customer Service and User**  
**Engagement Policy**

## Document Release Note

Document Name: User Engagement Policy

Document Details Name	Version Number	Description
Customer Service and User Engagement Policy	v002	A customer service and user engagement policy for Official Statistics.

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v002	28/04/2021	Updates made as part of annual refresh			Minor typographical changes	

### About this document

This is the NHS Business Services Authority's (NHSBSA) policy and procedure on customer service and engagement in relation to the production of Official and National Statistics. This document has been written in the context of, and guided by, the release of the Government Statistical Service (GSS) [user engagement strategy for statistics](#).

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## Section 1: Customer service commitment

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The NHSBSA strives to provide accurate, timely, relevant and easily accessible statistics to all our users, produced in line with the United Kingdom Statistics Authority (UKSA) [Code of Practice for Statistics](#) ('Code of Practice'). The statistical publications we release will be of high quality, worthy of trust, and of value to support understanding of the important issues.

Our commitment to customers of our official statistics products is as follows:

- Our statistical outputs will be produced in a timely manner and as quickly as possible.
- Specific dates of release will be pre-announced in accordance with the Code of Practice.
- Any changes to pre-announced dates will be explained, alongside a revised publication date if known on our website.
- Information on who has pre-release access to our statistical outputs will be published.
- We will include the name and contact details of the lead statistician responsible for each statistical output at the front of the main release.
- Our customers will be able to contact us to share their views and opinions about our official statistics.
- We will respond quickly and accurately to questions and enquiries from our customers.
- We aim to consult with customers on developments and changes to our statistics, methodologies, publications, or publication processes.
- We will pre-announce any notable methodological changes to our Official Statistics, either in a prior release or on our website.
- We will respond in a timely manner to any complaints from customers
- We will regularly review our Official Statistics products, data collections, and analysis and dissemination methods to identify on-going opportunities for improvement and to maintain relevance.

## Section 2: Access to Statistics

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We are committed to releasing our statistical publications in an open and transparent manner that promotes public confidence. All of our National and Official Statistics publications can be accessed via the statistics section of the NHSBSA webpages.

Our routinely produced statistics are available free of charge on our website.

In accordance with the Code of Practice, we will aim to announce the month of release of our statistical publications at least 12 months in advance and give a specific release date at least four weeks in advance.

All published statistics will be published at 9.30am on the scheduled day unless otherwise announced.

The needs of people with disabilities will always be considered in the production of our statistics and data releases. We will use accessible communication formats throughout our publications that will work with the most commonly used assistive technologies. You can read our [accessibility statement for Official Statistic narratives](#) on our website.

## Section 3: Format of releases

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Official Statistics must keep pace with user needs to keep them relevant and useful. There is not a 'one size fits all' approach to how we release information as different users have different requirements. With different types of users accessing our product offer will reflect this. We will always aim to produce our statistical releases with several layers of detail aimed at different user groups.

The content of our products and the supporting information we provide will be informed by an understanding of our customers' needs. We aim to help all our users understand our products better by publishing and referring to supporting, background or educational information and material alongside our releases. We are committed to releasing the data that is behind our reports and publications at an appropriate level, to enable and encourage re-use.

Our statistical publications and data which they are derived will be made available in range of ways, including some of following formats:

- Portable Document Format (.pdf)
- HTML
- Open Document Format (.ods)
- Comma Separated Values (.csv)
- Through our [Open Data Portal](#) (ODP).

We aim to make our data available in a way that meets open data standards and principles wherever possible. We recognise that, through greater transparency and making more of our data open, we can inspire choice and increase accountability.

We aim to make the data that our statistics are based on available to users at the lowest level of granularity possible without revealing personal information.

Our publications will include details of how users can obtain statistics in a range of formats such as audio, braille, or large print.

## Section 4: Who are our customers?

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Statistical publications produced by the NHSBSA have a diverse customer base, and broadly fall into the following groups:

- Ministers and officials in Government departments
- Policy and operational officials
- Parliament
- Local authorities
- External interest groups
- The media and external commentators
- Academics
- Businesses
- Members of the public
- NHS administrators and staff

We acknowledge however this list is neither exhaustive nor fixed and there are potential users of our Official Statistics not captured here. We're committed to regular user engagement and are committed to ensuring our user reach remains relevant and fluid.

## Section 5: How we engage with our customers

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We recognise that our customers will have different needs and we use a range of different methods to contact them.

We meet internal customers on a regular basis to discuss their needs and requirements.

Engagement with our external customers can be through our website, formal consultation, by email, social media channels, and regular user group events which encourage users from outside the organisation to engage with us. We always invite users to share their comments or views about our Official Statistics, or to simply advise us how they use our statistical publications.

A customer can contact NHSBSA statisticians about a specific publication by email. The email address of the lead statistician responsible for each publication can be found on the NHSBSA statistics homepage as well as in the respective publication.

We welcome all feedback and any views on how we can improve our statistical publications from our users.

Proactive engagement drives our customer relationship, we are committed to regularly think about the wider environment our Official Statistics exist in and consider new and potential users to ensure that our user reach remains relevant and fluid.

We are committed to regular engagement activities that meet the needs of all of users and to reviewing the effectiveness of these activities, innovating to ensure that users remain at the core of our publications.

## Section 6: Access to information not in regular publications

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All statistical publications will contain a contact email address and contact telephone numbers for the responsible statistician. Media enquiries regarding the contacts of a specific release should be directed to: [nhsbsa.communicationsteam@nhs.net](mailto:nhsbsa.communicationsteam@nhs.net).

Users can request statistics not contained in existing NHSBSA statistical publications by making a [Freedom of Information request](#).

We want to make as much information available at the lowest cost to the public. Any charges the NHSBSA make will be justified, transparent and kept to a minimum.

Users can request data that is not available through Freedom of Information from [NHSBSA Information Services](#). We do not charge for data, but we do apply charges to cover the cost of processing and delivering the service. We make sure charges are applied fairly and consistently, broadly determined by the amount of effort and approvals required. Note these data access processes are subject to review and may change in line with the wider health and social care landscape and organisational requirements.

## Section 7: Consultation on statistics

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Where appropriate, we will consult with customers on developments and changes to our statistics methodologies, publications, or publication processes. These consultations will be communicated through the NHSBSA statistics homepage

Our consultations will be for a minimum of 4 weeks and a maximum of 13 weeks depending on the nature of the consultation.

We will respond to every consultation providing a summary of all responses, the actions we will take, and the rationale for those actions.

Our responses to consultations on statistics will be published on our website.

Proposals to introduce, withdraw or substantially modify National Statistics data collections and outputs (for example, timing, content, coverage, methodologies) will always be subject to consultation. We will make information about our consultations available on our website and we will notify active user groups and others with a recognised interest in the topic.

We will conduct consultations on an appropriate scale, balancing the importance of the issue and the impact of users' views against the time and resources available in order to make sure they are of value to the public.

## Section 8: Customer Complaints Policy

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Every member of our staff has a responsibility to:

- provide good customer service
- try to resolve customer concerns as quickly, fairly, and thoroughly as possible

We use complaints as an opportunity to learn how we can improve our services to customers. We will do everything we can to resolve complaints as quickly as possible without having to escalate to the formal complaint procedure.

We will provide the name and contact details of the lead statistician responsible for each statistical output, including this in the preface of each publication.

If for any reason you feel that the service you receive from NHSBSA statisticians has fallen below the standards you expect or has not lived up to the statements made in our statistical policies and procedures, then please contact us so we can investigate.

Please provide as much relevant information as possible to ensure that it is dealt with promptly and accurately.

If direct contact would not be appropriate or if having done this you remain dissatisfied, you can contact to the Lead Official for Statistics in the NHSBSA by email at: [nhsbsa.statistics@nhs.net](mailto:nhsbsa.statistics@nhs.net).

Complaints can also be made in writing to:

Lead Official for Statistics

NHS Business Services Authority

Stella House

Goldcrest Way

Newburn Riverside

Newcastle upon Tyne

NE15 8NY

If you are still not satisfied, and the issue relates to the Code of Practice for Statistics, then you can refer your complaint to the UK Statistics Authority. The Authority can be contacted:

In writing at:

UK Statistics Authority

1 Drummond Gate

London SW1V 2QQ

By e-mail:

[authority.enquiries@statistics.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:authority.enquiries@statistics.gsi.gov.uk)

## Contact us

Feedback is important to us; we welcome any questions and comments relating to this document.

Please quote 'Statistics Customer Service and User Engagement Policy' in the subject title of any correspondence.

You can contact us by:

**Email:** [nhsbsa.statistics@nhs.net](mailto:nhsbsa.statistics@nhs.net)

**Telephone:** 0191 203 5050

You can also write to us at:

NHSBSA - Statistics  
NHS Business Services Authority  
Stella House  
Goldcrest Way  
Newburn Riverside  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE15 8NY

**END.**