Users and Uses of the Statistics

From our engagement with customers, we know that there are many users of the Obesity, Physical Activity and Diet (OPAD) statistics. There are also many users of these statistics who we do not know about. We are continually aiming to improve our understanding of who our users are in order to enhance our knowledge on what the uses of the data are via recent consultations and feedback forms available online. Below is listed our current understanding of the known users and uses of these statistics. Also included are the methods we use to attempt to engage with the current unknown users.

Known Users and Uses

**Department of Health (DH)** - frequently use these statistics to inform policy and planning. The Public Health Outcomes Framework was published in January 2012. The document sets out the desired outcomes for public health and how these will be measured. The framework includes specific indicators for the proportion of physically active and inactive adults, excess weight in children (aged 4-5 years and 10-11 years old) and excess weight in adults. The data signposted to in this report will be used to monitor these indicators.

**NHS** - A wide range of organisations use the information to monitor and target services to tackle obesity, physical activity and diet recommendations. The aim is to provide a key source of obesity, physical activity and diet information for public health, commissioning and performance management colleagues at a national level.

**Media** – the data is used to underpin articles in newspapers, journals, etc on matters of public interest. A recent example is available at: [http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-12566504](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-12566504)

**Public** – all information is accessible for general public use for any particular purpose. For example, comparing local and national data.

**Academia and Researchers** - a number of academics papers have cited the Statistics on obesity, physical activity and diet as a source of information in peer reviewed papers, examples were under the users section of this document.

**Ad-hoc Requests** - the statistics are used by the NHS Information Centre (NHS IC) to answer Parliamentary Questions (PQs), Freedom of Information (FOI) requests, and ad-hoc queries. Ad-hoc requests are received from health professionals, research companies, public sector organisations, and from members of the public showing that the statistics are used widely and not solely within the profession.
Throughout the year we receive comments from users of the statistics via an online feedback form (see ‘Unknown Users’). The comments we receive, and any actions we undertake as a result of these, are summarised and presented alongside the publication as a separate PDF document:

In 2011/12, we received 7 comments via this route. These were from a range of users including local authority (2), primary care trust (1) student (1), academic research (1), regional government office (1) and public health organisation (1).

**Unknown Users**

The report is free to access via the NHS IC website and therefore the majority of users will access the report without being known to the NHS IC. Therefore it is important to put mechanisms in place to try to understand how these additional users are using the statistics and also to gain feedback on how we can make the data more useful to them. On the webpage where the report is surfaced there is a link to a feedback webform which the NHS IC uses for all its reports. The specific questions asked on the form are:

- How useful did you find the content in this publication?
- How did you find out about this publication?
- What type of organisation do you work for?
- What did you use the report for? What information was the most useful? Were you happy with the data quality?
- To help us improve our publications, what changes would you like to see (for instance content or timing)?
- Would you like to take part in future consultations on our publications?

Any responses via this webform are passed to the team responsible for the report to consider.

We also capture information on the number of web hits the reports receive, although we are unable to capture who the users are from this. OPAD 2011 generated approximately 37,326 unique web hits for the period (March 2011 to January 2012).

**Consultation**

We recently engaged with the users of these compendia reports to gain a fuller understanding of the users and uses. The NHS IC launched an online public user consultation in Spring 2011 to gain the views of the users of these statistics to ensure these statistics remain relevant and useful. This has helped determine the content of this publication. The review outcome document can be found via this link: [http://www.ic.nhs.uk/webfiles/Work%20with%20us/consultations/Lifestyles_Statistics_Compendia_Publications_Consultation_Review_Outcome.pdf](http://www.ic.nhs.uk/webfiles/Work%20with%20us/consultations/Lifestyles_Statistics_Compendia_Publications_Consultation_Review_Outcome.pdf)