

Official Statistics at NHSBSA

Work plan 2021/22

Document release note

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Official Statistics at NHSBSA – Work plan 2021/22	v001	A publicly released document outlining our programme of work for NHSBSA Official Statistics.

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About this document

This is our work plan for Official Statistics in 2021/22. This workplan is based upon user need, organisational ambition, and NHS priorities. It is aligned with the pillars of the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#): trustworthiness, quality, and value.

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1. Introduction

We strive to generate trust in what we release through a commitment of transparency alongside a pledge to increase the scope of what we release as part of our Official Statistics publications and Open Data products. The Official Statistics that we produce are impartial, independent, and worthy of trust. We recognise that through greater transparency and making data more open we can inspire choice and accountability.

This document outlines our plans for Official Statistics at NHSBSA in 2021/22; this plan is based on user need, organisational ambition, and NHS priorities.

In forming our work plan and delivering our Official Statistics and Open Data releases the pillars of the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#) guide us:

- **Trustworthiness** – we will be open and transparent with our users about our plans
- **Quality** – we will strive to maintain and improve the robustness and quality of the statistics we publish
- **Value** – we will make our statistics available to users in a timely manner and in an accessible format

We believe publishing effectively is a crucial part of our vision of being a ‘catalyst for better health’.

1.1. COVID-19

The UK’s statistical system is continuing to serve the public good in the face of the challenges posed by the ongoing coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The NHSBSA continues to play its part in supporting the national response to the pandemic. During 2020/21 Official Statistics at NHSBSA delivered on our work plan for the year and adapted our statistical releases with data and commentary related to COVID-19 where possible and most appropriate. For 2021/22 we will continue to adapt our releases to consider COVID-19 to deliver value and understanding on the most important issues of today.

2. What we plan to do in 2021/22

2.1. Building on our foundation

In 2019 we launched our [publication strategy](#) which set out our ambition to move from being a provider of data for Official Statistics to a producer. This outlined how, by utilising our expertise, we can better tell the story of the data we collect and inform public debate; consolidate and standardise our reporting; remove duplication of effort across the health and social care system; and enable greater efficiencies.

After a public consultation held by NHS Digital, we have successfully migrated three publications previously produced by them. Alongside these existing publications we also released the first in a new series for England, Medicines Used in Mental Health. These four publications form the core of our statistical outputs, with each carrying lessons learnt forward from the previous. There is still much work to do on these releases to make sure that they meet our user's needs and that they add value and inform understanding of key areas of the health and social care system.

We now have a strong foundation to build on as a relatively new producer of Official Statistics. However, it is important that we continue to innovate in our existing statistical products whilst also seeking out new areas for analysis. We are realistic about the challenges that are ahead of us and recognise that we need the support of our external partners to achieve our vision.

2.2. Official Statistics releases

Official Statistics at NHSBSA contributes to the collective mission of the UK's statistical system to provide:

“High quality data and analysis to inform the UK, improve lives and build the future.”¹

What follows is our plan for Official Statistics at NHSBSA in 2021/22. It is not exhaustive, and we will continue to provide robust, high quality, and relevant statistics during a time of new and fast-emerging analytical demands. This includes exploratory analysis to determine potentially new Official statistics releases. We will also reflect on

¹ Statistics for the public good, 2020 to 2025, UKSA, <https://uksa.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/UKSA-Strategy-2020.pdf>

Freedom of Information requests and Parliamentary Questions that we receive to understand the themes that are most important to users and the wider public.

We plan to publish the following Official Statistic releases in 2021/22:

Current releases

- Prescription Cost Analysis – England 2020/21
- Medicines Used in Mental Health – England 2015/16 to 2020/21
 - Medicines Used in Mental Health – England quarterly summaries
- Prescribing for Diabetes – England 2015/16 to 2020/21
- General Pharmaceutical Services – England 2015/16 to 2020/21

New releases for 2021/22

- Prescribing Costs in Hospitals and the Community – England 2020/21²

In line with the Code of Practice with Statistics we pre-announce the dates for publication of all our releases 12 months in advance on our [Statistical Publication Calendar](#).

2.3. Improvements to statistics

The Code of Practice for Statistics is at the heart of our Official Statistic production, ensuring that we produce statistics and analyses that are independent, robust, and relevant to users. We are committed to a process of continuing improvement in our publications to make sure they align with these principles. We will be sensitive to emerging trends and recognise the potential of harnessing technological advances for the development of our publication production process and Open Data dissemination.

Trustworthiness

- We will continue to generate trust in what we release through a commitment of transparency and pledge to increase the scope of what we release.

² Migrated to NHSBSA from NHS Digital in 2021 after successful migration of previous Prescribing and Medicines publications.

- Overcome barriers to release the production code for our Official Statistic releases, ‘coding in the open’ to be as transparent as possible with users.
- A key element of our commitment is to ensure our plans, priorities, and progress against them is transparent; this work plan is part of that.

Quality

- Continue to update and expand our quality reporting, providing clear, up to date quality information alongside all our statistical series.
- Keep our methodology and technical documentation under review to make sure it is up to date and proportionate for all our statistical series.
- Actively participating in Government Statistical Service harmonisation activities by working with our colleagues in devolved administrations who produce comparable releases.
- Further improve the quality of our releases by increasing transparency about our quality assurance (QA) and methodological approaches.
- Enhance our approaches to make sure QA is embedded into automation of processes to produce statistics as part of Reproducible Analytical Pipelines (RAP).

Value

- Reflect to make sure our Official Statistic releases support society’s needs for information, ensuring what we produce adds value, is useful, easy to access and relevant to aid understanding of important issues today.
- Maintain and refresh our understanding of the user and potential user of our statistics and data.

2.4. Open Data releases

Alongside our journey to become an established and trusted Official Statistics producer we have also endeavoured to consolidate and expand our Open Data offerings. We launched our Open Data Portal (ODP) in 2020 which provides users with access to datasets to download, filter, and explore using a frontend GUI or to do more complex aggregations and analysis using a powerful RPC API. As an organisation we are moving to ‘open by default’, but like our Official Statistics journey we recognise the

challenges ahead of us and understand that we will require support from our external partners to help us achieve our ambitions.

Open Data releases do not fall solely on the Official Statistics team, they are done in collaboration with other teams, directorates, and subject matter experts within NHSBSA. We are committed to publishing more of our data in an open manner and will be working with stakeholders and users in early 2021/22 to develop a roadmap for releases. This document will be updated to reflect this when the roadmap is released.

2.5. Additional activities

As well as performing our main core function of producing Official Statistics we are committed to putting users at the heart of our publications. As part of this we will be running our bi-annual user engagement sessions where users are invited to give us their feedback on all our releases. We will also launch a public consultation on the Prescribing Costs in Hospitals and the Community publication. This will allow us to better understand the users of this release, gauge interest in new content, and allow users to comment on our proposals to change the underlying administrative data source of these statistics. Details of user engagement sessions and public consultations can be found on our [Consultations and User Engagement webpage](#).

Contact us

Feedback is important to us. We welcome all comments about this document and its contents. Please quote 'Official Statistics Workplan 2021/22' in the subject title of any correspondence.

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