

Future of Population Health Surveys including an update on the Health Survey for England

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Paul Niblett (DHSC) & Tim Vizard (ONS)

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Background

- ❖ The Health Survey for England (HSE) is an annual survey commissioned by NHS England, indirectly funded by DHSC and currently carried out by the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) and University College London (UCL).
- ❖ The survey monitors trends in the nation's health and care, providing information about adults aged 16 and over, and children aged 0 to 15, living in private households in England.
- ❖ Each survey currently operates in two stages:
 - A face-to-face interview which includes core questions (e.g. about smoking, alcohol use, general health) and measurements of height and weight. There are question modules on specific topics that vary from year to year.
 - A face-to-face biomedical interview to measure blood pressure and take blood and saliva samples (for those who agree).
- ❖ The Health Survey for England (HSE) has been used to inform the government's Health Mission and is one of the sources used in Lord Darzi's Review of the NHS. It is seen as the best source of national population health data for key indicators to inform policy, while other sources are used for local data. HSE provides regular information that cannot be obtained from other sources. Survey data is also heavily used by researchers and academics.

Reason for change

- ❖ In 2024, NHS England announced that they would not be prioritising population health surveys as part of their long-term strategic work plan, and that Health Survey for England 2025 would be the last HSE they would resource.
- ❖ DHSC have commissioned ONS to undertake a “discovery” project on the future of population health surveys, including the Health Survey for England.
- ❖ ONS will be exploring the current requirements for population health data, whilst researching alternative methods for delivery from 2027 and beyond.

What will this discovery look at?

- ❖ Assessing user need
- ❖ Exploring opportunities from admin data sources
- ❖ Reviewing key elements of survey design
- ❖ Consideration about impact of any potential changes

Assessing user need

- ❖ Gathered requirements from DHSC and relevant policy areas on key data needs.
- ❖ Held one-to-one sessions with current contractor team to understand more about current HSE design.
- ❖ Sent out a qualitative questionnaire to those who had registered interest in the redevelopment of HSE to understand more about their data needs.

Explore opportunities for data linkage

- ❖ Exploring what admin data is available.
- ❖ Exploring potential uses of admin data to improve quality of survey.
- ❖ Understanding challenges of using admin data in survey design.

Potential uses of admin data

- ❖ Improving sample design
- ❖ Reducing respondent burden
- ❖ Weighting

Challenges of using admin data

- ❖ Accessibility
- ❖ Quality
- ❖ Coverage

Reviewing key elements of survey design

- ❖ **Mode of collection:** Exploring whether online data collection can be used to improve HSE survey design.
- ❖ **Sample frames:** HSE currently uses a PAF based sample. Are there other sample frames out there which could improve survey design?
- ❖ Assessment of **priority topics** for the survey.
- ❖ Assessment of **outputs** from the survey.

Consideration around impact of change

- ❖ Should changes be proposed to HSE, the impact of these will be assessed:
 - ❖ Peer review from methodologist and survey design experts (independent from discovery team)
 - ❖ Engagement with Ethics Panel
 - ❖ Completion of Equality Impact Assessment and Data Protection Impact Assessment

Timeline (dates TBC)



Thank you! Any questions?