



The Health Foundation: Evidence Hub

Voluntary compliance with the Code of Practice for Statistics

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About The Health Foundation and WPI Economics

The Health Foundation (THF) is an independent charity committed to bringing about better health and health care for people in the UK. It works to make people's lives healthier and improve the health care system. From giving grants to those working at the front line to carrying out research and policy analysis, they shine a light on how to make successful change happen.

The 'Healthy Lives' team within the Health Foundation look at the factors that shape where we live, learn, work and play, the team influences decision makers to look beyond health care and think about the wider determinants of health. We aim to change the conversation to focus on health as an asset, rather than ill health as a burden – and to promote policies and encourage local action that improves opportunities for a healthy life in the UK.

WPI Economics is an economics, data insight and public policy consultancy that specialises in conducting research, analysis and modelling that makes an impact on important social and economic policy debates, such as health and wellbeing, poverty and the recovery from pandemic. We are driven by a desire to make a difference, both through the work we undertake and by taking our responsibilities as a business seriously. We work with a range of organisations – from FTSE 100/250 companies to SMEs and charities and Central and Local Government.

About the Health Foundation's Evidence Hub

The Health Foundation and WPI Economics are working in partnership to develop and maintain the Health Foundation's Evidence Hub. The Hub is part of the Health Foundation's objective to change the national conversation on health away from just personal responsibility and towards the social and economic factors that underpin good health. As such it contains analysis on the associations between the wider determinants of health – such as income, housing or employment – and health outcomes. It also reports the latest data on the trends in these wider determinants of health and the inequalities within these areas, such as by sex, ethnicity or age.

Contacting us

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Voluntary statement of compliance

Our approach to the creation and maintenance of the Evidence Hub is to ensure that it provides the most robust information possible on inequalities in health across the UK and the wider determinants of health that drive these. To have an impact, our work must build trust with key stakeholders and users, and voluntarily adhering to the UKSA’s Code of Practice for Statistics is a key part of ensuring that we have the right approach, processes and procedures in place to build that trust.

As such, both WPI Economics (WPI) and The Health Foundation (THF), are fully committed to voluntarily complying with the principles of the Code for the Evidence Hub. Whilst the Evidence Hub does not produce official statistics, we hope that basing our approach on these principles, will ensure that users can engage in objective debate on the determinants of health, and how health inequalities can be tackled across the UK.

The Code of Practice has three pillars: Trustworthiness, Quality and Value. Our compliance with these pillars of the Code of Practice are highlighted in table 1.

Table 1: Voluntary compliance with the Code of Practice for Statistics – The Health Foundation Evidence Hub

| <i>Pillar</i> | <i>Detail</i> |
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| Trustworthiness: confidence in the people and organisations that produce statistics and data. | <p>Delivering on this project will require our work to be trusted and valued. At the heart of this is the team that is delivering the Hub. This is a collaboration between WPI Economics and the Health Foundation.</p> <p>The Health Foundation is an independent charity committed to bring about better health and health care for people in the UK.</p> <p>The Health Foundation’s Evidence Hub was developed over a period of 3 years and the first iteration was available online in 2021.</p> <p>Our aim is a healthier population, supported by high quality health care that can be equitably accessed. From giving grants to those working at the front line to carrying out research and policy analysis, we shine a light on how to make successful change happen. We use what we know works on the ground to inform effective policymaking and vice versa.</p> <p>We believe good health and health care are key to a flourishing society. Through sharing what we learn, collaborating with others and building people’s skills and knowledge, we aim to make a difference and contribute to a healthier population. The Health Foundation’s contribution to the Hub is led by Adam Tinson (Senior Analyst) and David Finch (Assistant Director)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adam is a quantitative analyst with ten years of experience working on economic and social policy. Previously, Adam worked for the New Policy Institute, a think tank producing analysis on poverty and disadvantage. His most recent role was Head of Research, leading the organisation’s research projects and devising new research proposals. He acts as content lead from the Health Foundation’s side. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- David currently leads a programme of work developing policy and analysis related to the wider determinants of health. His work focuses the role that social and economic policy and business can play in improving health, and understanding the influence that health has on social and economic outcomes of people and places. Previously David worked for the Resolution Foundation as a Senior Fellow working on a range of issues including tax and benefit policy with a focus on Universal Credit, calculating the Living Wage, demographics, pensions and pay progression. Prior to this, he worked as an Economic Adviser at the Department for Work and Pensions on areas including childcare and state pensions <p>WPI Economics is an economics, data insight and public policy consultancy that specialises in conducting research, analysis and modelling that makes an impact on important social and economic policy debates, such as health and wellbeing, poverty and the recovery from pandemic. We are driven by a desire to make a difference, both through the work we undertake and by taking our responsibilities as a business seriously. We work with a range of organisations – from FTSE 100/250 companies to SMEs and charities and Central and Local Government.</p> <p>WPI’s contribution to the Hub is led by Guy Weir (Head of Data Insight), Matthew Oakley (Director) and Julia Wyjadlowska (Data Insights Analyst).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Guy is a quantitative researcher/analyst with more than 15 years working in social and consumer policy contexts. Prior to this role at WPI Economics Guy was principal statistician at the consumer group Which?, and held a number of research and statistical roles within the civil service. He acts as project lead from WPI’s side and oversees the day-to-day deliverables of the project. He is an accredited researcher with ONS’ Secure Research Service.- Julia recently graduated from an MSc in Behavioural and Economic Science at the University of Warwick, where she also worked as a student communications researcher. She joined WPI Economics in 2021 as a Data Insights Analyst. She is particularly interested in behavioural insights and their applications to public policy, and has experience in experimental economics and psychology, including running a large experiment to investigate the effect of beliefs in karmic justice on honesty. She is an ONS accredited researcher and will lead on development and maintenance of indicators.- Matthew is an experienced economist and policy analyst. He has previously been responsible for ownership and management of personal labour market micro data security at HM Treasury. He has significant experience in managing and using confidential personal data and is accredited to use confidential microdata researcher with ONS’ Secure Research Service. He has led WPI’s engagement with the Social Metrics Commission (including voluntary compliance with the Code of Practice) for the last six years. He acts as the senior |
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| | <p>responsible officer on this project, with full oversight of outputs and ultimate responsibility for quality assurance.</p> <p>Data protection / information security</p> <p>WPI Economics and the Health Foundation all have robust data protection and information security procedures in place, as outlined in a GDPR regulation policy available to all staff. This includes detail of how data breaches can be identified and actions that should be taken if breaches are identified.</p> <p>These policies are updated regularly, and all relevant staff are trained and aware of both their legal responsibilities and their broader responsibilities in ensuring the credibility and trustworthiness of the output of the Hub and analysts more generally.</p> <p>In practical terms, this involves a number of steps including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Secure storage of data – with access restricted to those who need and are authorised to view data.- Codified environment – all data processing steps are undertaken from via replicable and internally peer reviewed code in R. Inputs are taken as they are from the data supplier/origin and no manual manipulation of any data takes place, nor do we rely on spreadsheet formulae in any way in the production of our summary outputs. Processing steps are carefully annotated to aid peer review and future updating. Every summary output is treated as a separate entity with each one getting all the processing steps necessary from raw data to final output removing any co-dependencies on shared interim steps.- Back up / disaster recovery – Code (but not raw input data) is securely version controlled via GitHub. This means that every edit or additional processing step can be safely removed or rolled back to a previous state if necessary, or simply examined to be able to assess the nature of any changes made in the code. <p>Decision making</p> <p>With two teams collaborating on the development and maintenance of the Hub, it is important to ensure that the responsibilities and practices of each party are clearly identified. This ensures that appropriate sign-off procedures are in place and can be followed. This is documented through a detailed Memorandum of Understanding between WPI Economics and the Health Foundation.</p> <p>Involving others</p> <p>To inform and support the development of the Evidence Hub, the team also engages with a wide range of expert stakeholders, including academics (both in the UK and internationally), public health professionals / experts, other data analysts and data users. These stakeholders are vital in ensuring an open process dialogue around the future of the Hub’s content and outputs and ensuring that it meets users’ needs.</p> |
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| | <p><i>Ensuring openness and transparency</i></p> <p>Openness and transparency are an important part of building trustworthiness. As such, as a team, we are committed to releasing statistics and analysis in an open and transparent manner, as well as working with a wide range of stakeholders to ensure that they understand and can access our research and analysis.</p> <p>In practical terms, the whole purpose of the Hub is to increase openness and transparency. It is a freely available tool aimed at building understanding of key issues around the determinants of health and, as such, our goal is to make it accessible for the widest range of audiences possible.</p> <p>It is worth note that the Code of Practice for Statistics requires that when official statistics are published (put in the public domain), they are equally available to all. Our work on the Evidence Hub will comply to this principle. In particular we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Once releases are made public, they will be published freely for all on the Evidence Hub. - Where results are released early to media outlets and key stakeholders, this will be under a strict embargo. We will also consider all requests for access to embargoed releases. - Underlying data that is used to create indicator charts will be freely available for all through the data download function on each indicator. |
| <p><i>Quality:</i> data and methods that produce assured statistics</p> | <p><i>Internal quality assurance</i></p> <p>The quality of the analysis on the Hub is central to ensuring that our work is impactful and deepens understanding of the determinants of health. The first element of ensuring quality is centred on the expertise and experience of those involved in developing the Hub. As highlighted above, our teams are expert users and creators of social science statistics and have deep experience in using personal microdata and administrative data to analyse social and economic issues.</p> <p>The Memorandum of Understanding also includes a robust Quality Assurance procedure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Input data is accepted only from recognised high-quality government or academic sources. - Processing of raw data into summary statistics for tabulations and charting is conducted in a fully annotated and version controlled code environment (as outlined above). - Code steps are internally peer reviewed and where possible statistical outputs are checked against other published statistics from that source, and/or previous iterations of the same analysis. - Outputs are examined in small batches at a QA meeting attended by both THF and WPI before both organisations sign off on their suitability for publication. |

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| | <p>- Associated descriptive copy is also examined in draft form in these sessions before being subject to copy-editing.</p> <p>- When copy-edits are complete both organisations will examine the outputs on a secure and hidden 'staging' web page for final sign off before publication.</p> <p>External quality assurance</p> <p>Where the team are undertaking new and / or complex analysis, the Memorandum of Understanding allows for the use of external peer review.</p> <p>More generally, the use of a Steering Group and expert Advisory Group will allow the team to sense check findings and methodologies with a range of experts. Whilst there is no formal responsibility on these groups, they provide a level of external critique, which is essential in developing the Hub's approach and outputs.</p> |
| <p>Value: statistics that support society's needs for information</p> | <p>Improving knowledge and understanding</p> <p>This principle has been at the heart of the development of the Hub. The purpose of the Hub is to improve understanding and thereby drive action to improve health by tackling the underlying drivers. As such we are committed to ensuring that it meets the needs of users and society more generally.</p> <p>There are a number of aspects to this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Freely available statistics. - Understanding gaps in evidence - Understanding users' needs <p>Meeting the needs of different users of information</p> <p>A key part of success for the Hub will be in ensuring that analysis and data contained on it are understood by a range of different users and can be readily applied to tackling the underlying issues that they seek to explain. We are also aware that the users of our work are varied and have different needs. Our approach to tackling this involves producing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interactive versions of the indicators online; • Downloadable sources and source data for the indicators; • Short non-technical summaries of our work; • Full long-reads with the detail; • A range of infographics and public-facing communications collateral that can be used (e.g.) on social media to spread understanding beyond those who might ordinarily access the Hub. <p>Sustainable value</p> <p>The ultimate goal of the hub is to help change the national conversation on health away from just personal responsibility and towards the social and economic factors that underpin good health.</p> |

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| | <p>Achieving this will take time and, as such, it is clear that this is a long-term project. Sustainability is at the heart of what we have developed. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Succession planning and disaster recovery: The approach to the production of outputs disseminated via the evidence hub is to develop a rich code base that will facilitate fast re-production and updating of the published outputs to ensure it is as up to date as can be. This should help to foster greater trust and credibility in the outputs, and ultimately result in the greater likelihood of a long term presence of the Evidence Hub due to the lower resource overhead associated with keeping it up to date.- A Steering Group and Advisory Group are used to gain views and strategic input into the direction of our work and outputs on the Hub. This helps to ensure that it remains relevant. This also helps us to ensure that potential users know about the Hub and how it can be used.- User Testing to ensure that the resources remain accessible and useful to the intended user base. We have already carried out one round of user testing and intend to conduct more in 2022/2023/ |
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