

Annex: Review of actions taken in response to Assessment Report 374: Statistics from the People and Nature Survey for England (PaNS), produced by Natural England

Requirement	Actions taken by Natural England to meet the requirement	OSR's evaluation of evidence
<p>Requirement 1: To enhance the public value of PaNS statistics, Natural England should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • publish development plans with timescales and share with its newly expanded user base. • ensure that users have opportunities to contribute to development planning, are aware in advance of developments being launched, and have opportunities to contribute their views on new developments once published. • enable wider access to the data by continuing with plans to make it available through the UK Data Service or equivalent platforms. <p>This will help ensure that users' needs are fully understood, and their use of the statistics is supported</p>	<p>The PaNS team has drafted a development plan which it aims to publish in July 2023 and promote its publication through its usual communication channels. The team plans to update this information on a regular basis as its work progresses.</p> <p>The PaNS team held a Research User Group meeting in January 2023 to present its proposed development plans to users and seek feedback on them before finalising. The team has shared recordings of the user group meetings with its user base to reach a wider audience. The next Research User Group meeting will be held in December 2023.</p> <p>PaNS data were uploaded for the first time through the UK Data Service on 21 June 2023. Initially, this is just in the form of Excel files (as published on gov.uk). Over time the team plans to add additional file formats to enhance usability by researchers. The team alerted users when the data went live and plans to send out a questionnaire with its next monthly newsletter to give stakeholders time to have tried to access the data via the UK Data Service before they respond.</p> <p>In addition to these actions to enhance the public value of these statistics through better understanding users' needs and communicating its future plans, the PaNS team has:</p>	<p>The PaNS team's developments for 2023/24 have been informed by users and are set out in a very clear and engaging manner in its draft plan. It is clear on why it is taking forward new developments and what it aims to achieve by these. Natural England also explains where some issues identified by users are not being taken forward.</p> <p>The development plan was published 26 June 2023.</p> <p>It is apparent from the recording of the Research User Group meeting that this was a successful and established forum to engage with users. The conversations held were open and users actively participated – a great example of user engagement. We consider it a positive step that the PaNS team is aiming to meet with this user group more often.</p> <p>We are pleased to see that the PaNS team successfully uploaded data to the UK Data Service. Doing so will enable wider access and use of the data.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increased the frequency of its Research User Group meetings to be held twice a year; • started to work with content designers at its parent department – the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) – to redesign the PaNS pages on gov.uk and make the content more accessible to users; and • updated its technical report in November 2022 in response to our early assessment findings and plans to update this on an annual basis. <p>The team had planned to publish the meetings minutes on its dedicated People and Nature User Hub (rather than gov.uk) but the future of the User Hub is uncertain.</p>	<p>During our assessment we found Natural England’s User Hub a good and well-used vehicle to share helpful and informative materials with users. We consider it would be detrimental if it was no longer used and encourage Natural England to work with colleagues at Defra to ensure a suitable way exists to publish information about this survey.</p>
<p>Requirement 2: To help users develop a coherent understanding of people and nature across the UK, Natural England should assess the similarities and differences between each country’s surveys and explain these to users.</p>	<p>The PaNS team has continued conversations with colleagues at NatureScot and Natural Resources Wales and has built links with the producers of the Northern Ireland PaNS equivalent. This resulted in a commission to scope comparability of people and nature surveys across UK nations. At the end of October 2023, the team shared with us a copy of its cross-national comparison report which it plans to publish on the gov.uk website on Tuesday 19th December.</p> <p>This work was included in the published PaNS development plan to make users aware of this.</p>	<p>The PaNS team has recognised the value of providing information about UK comparability to users and has worked collaboratively with the other statistical producers to progress this work.</p>
<p>Requirement 3: To help users understand the differences between the People and Nature Survey and the</p>	<p>Natural England commissioned a scoping report to explore the differences between PaNS and MENE and on 11 September 2023 the PaNS team published its research report on the Comparability between the</p>	<p>The PaNS team has been proactive in taking forward this work, with the commissioned report being well-structured and covering key differences in sample</p>

<p>Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment, Natural England should investigate the discontinuity between the two timeseries and publish their findings.</p>	<p>People and Nature Survey and the Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment.</p>	<p>design, survey mode and questionnaire design. The information presented in the report helps users to understand the differences between the two surveys and the appropriateness of making any trend comparisons between the two.</p>
<p>Requirement 4: To help provide a more robust set of data, Natural England should work with the data supplier to understand the reasons behind survey participants answering ‘Don’t know/Prefer not to say’ and look at how these can be addressed where this would be practicable and valuable. In the interests of transparency any findings should be communicated to users.</p>	<p>The PaNS team added an additional question to the December 2022 survey to ask respondents why they have responded “don’t know” in the adult’s survey. This new question received more than 500 responses and it was identified that more than half of respondents reported making at least one visit in the last 14 days, but they did not know exactly how many. A new question has been added to the survey as a result to collect information about whether a visit has been made in the last 14 days and the PaNS team is also exploring whether there is a need to collect actual visit numbers.</p> <p>The PaNS team also sought advice from the Head of Research at OSR about how to take forward the next stage of the work for this requirement and has adopted the most appropriate approach to add value to the survey responses.</p> <p>The PaNS team published a blog on 13 November 2023 to explain to users what it has done to meet this requirement. The team told us that it also proposes adding a similar note to its UK Data Service release.</p>	<p>The PaNS team has taken the necessary steps working with its data supplier to understand the reasons behind survey participants answering ‘Don’t know/Prefer not to say.’ The team has considered how this can be addressed where this would be practicable and valuable.</p> <p>We consider that with the additional question added to the survey, the PaNS team should be able to better capture where some visits have taken place which should provide more-valuable data than respondents just using the “don’t know” response.</p>