



PHE Advisory Board Meeting

Title of meeting	PHE Advisory Board Meeting
Date	Wednesday 29 November 2017
Sponsor	Lee Bailey,
Presenters	Louise Park, Emma Carragher and Heather Ashford - Ipsos MORI
Title of paper	Findings of PHE's annual public opinion survey

1 Purpose of the paper

- 1.1 To share with the PHE Advisory Board the findings of PHE's fourth annual public opinion survey. Ipsos Mori who conducted the survey in September has prepared a breakdown of the survey findings as a presentation. The following paper outlines the topline findings.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 The Advisory Board is asked to **NOTE** the survey findings

3 Background

- 3.1 Ipsos MORI have been conducting PHE's annual public opinion survey since 2014. The survey aims to benchmark public opinion of PHE and to complement the research undertaken with stakeholders. It provides an independent measurement of how the public perceives PHE and its public health activities.

4 Methodology

- 4.1 Ipsos MORI interviewed 1,709 people, aged 15 years and over, across England. Respondents were asked questions during face-to-face interviews in their homes. Outputs from the research include data tabulations, topline results in the form of a marked-up questionnaire and a report in presentation format.
- 4.2 The report focusses on the research objectives, providing PHE with an understanding of the public's awareness of public health issues and activities. The research provides indicators towards the public's communications preferences for advice and information about health protection and wellbeing issues and topics.
- 4.3 As with previous surveys the research did not evaluate or monitor campaigns. There were no questions about specific campaigns. Questions focused on health promotion and health improvement in a general sense.

- 4.4 The survey questions covered two broad themes: awareness and understanding of PHE's work; and the public's views on public health issues.
- 4.5 Under the category of awareness Ipsos MORI asked participants questions about the following areas:
- Awareness and knowledge of us and our work.
 - Confidence and trust in our advice.
 - Public health issues.
 - People's expectations on government intervention.
- 4.6 The questionnaire included an invitation to take part in further public involvement activities by joining the People's Panel.

5 Topline findings

5.1 Awareness

- a) Recognition of PHE continues to grow with 56% of the public saying they have heard of PHE compared to 50% in 2016. Awareness has increased the most among older people and 2017 has seen the most significant increase in awareness in those from BME communities since the survey began. However awareness is still greater among people from white ethnic backgrounds.
- b) When offered a list of options, 57% of people are aware of PHE's advisory role, 46% think PHE publishes information on population health and 38% think PHE helps people live healthier lifestyles.
- c) A small but significant proportion (27%) of the public incorrectly think PHE has a role in inspecting hospitals, clinics and GP surgeries, therefore a rise in awareness does not in all cases reflect a rise in informed awareness.

5.2 Public Health issues and concerns

- a) Last year the top three health concerns of the general public were cancer, obesity and diabetes. This year cancer remains the biggest unprompted concern, followed by mental health (23%) and dementia (17%).
- b) It is significant that mental health is a growing concern amongst the public, with the percentage of people stating it as a concern at 21% last year and just 16% in 2014. This rise is particularly notable amongst young people, with 40% of 15-24 year olds stating it as a concern in 2017 compared to 23% last year.

5.3 Trust and confidence in PHE

- a) Public confidence in PHE's advice has increased significantly year on year since 2014. When given a brief description of PHE, 84% say they would be very or fairly confident in PHE's advice compared to 66% in 2014. And there is evidence to suggest that familiarity inspires confidence. Those who feel they know more about PHE are more likely to have confidence in our advice. Of those who say they know a great deal or a fair amount about PHE (92%) would have confidence in PHE's advice.
- b) The biggest reason behind the public's confidence in PHE is due to the

organisation being viewed as trustworthy, reliable, reputable or effective – around one in three (34%) suggest this. A further 32% say they have confidence in PHE because of its knowledge, skills and experience. And 17% says they have confidence in PHE because of its status as a government body. For those who are not confident in PHE's advice, the main reason given is lack of knowledge, awareness, visibility or publicity of and around PHE

- c) Public trust in PHE's advice on specific subject areas continues to grow. 79% say they have a great deal or a fair amount of trust in PHE advice about healthy living, up from 64% in 2015 and 72% in 2016. And public trust in PHE's advice about health threats has also risen steadily over time. 82% say they would trust our advice on these matters either a great deal or a fair amount up from 74% in 2016 and 66% in 2015.

5.4 Health interventions

- a) New questions were included in this year's questionnaire regarding the government's involvement and responsibility on public health issues. People broadly expect government intervention around their health with 53% believing the government does somewhat or far too little to help people lead healthier lifestyles and over one third (36%) believe the government does the right amount. Less than one in ten (9%) suggest the government does far or somewhat too much.
- b) However, nearly all participants also said that individuals had a significant responsibility in making sure they lived a healthy life.
- c) Employees are not seen to have the same level of responsibility as individuals, government and industry – less than one in five people think they have a great deal of responsibility.

6 **Conclusions**

- 6.1 Awareness of PHE is still growing which is encouraging although awareness levels among younger age groups and lower socioeconomic grades is much lower than other groups.
- 6.2 The public's health concerns continue to align with PHE's priorities although cancer stands out as their biggest concern. It is clear that the public are becoming increasingly concerned about mental health which links to the current direction of health policy.
- 6.3 There is general support for a variety of health interventions although many people think that individuals hold the greatest responsibility for their health. People are less likely to think that their employer holds responsibility for their health.
- 6.4 PHE continues to be seen as part of a group of key information sources for the public, alongside NHS partners and other professional healthcare bodies

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