

Supplementary written evidence submitted by Dr Timothy Ferris, National Director of Transformation, NHS England and NHS Improvement  
(DDA0067)

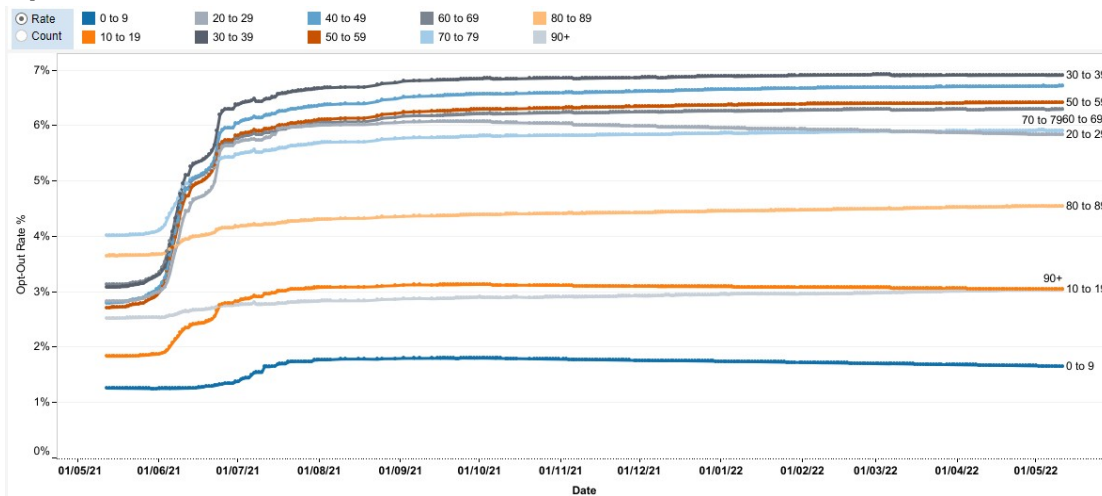
Thank you for giving me the opportunity to present evidence to your committee on the right to privacy and digital data as part of the oral evidence session on 20 April.

As part of my testimony, I committed to providing further information on whether analyses of the demographic distribution of National Data opt-outs have taken place.

I can confirm that NHS Digital monitors demographic factors and publishes [National Data Opt-out Statistics](#). These cover the number of people who have a national data opt-out, broken down by age, gender, and a variety of geographical breakdowns. Individuals can also choose to opt-out locally, wherein none of their data is shared outside a GP practice for purposes other than direct care. The information on national data opt-outs is published annually or when the national opt-out rate changes by more than 0.1 per cent. The latest publication was released on April 28 2022 and covers [1 May 2021 to 1 April 2022](#). This can be explored through the [National Data Opt-Out open data dashboard](#).

The graphs and tables below show regional and age-based opt-out data and the impact on bias in health data. For example, as people in their 30s have the highest rate of opt-out this group will be most impacted age group in datasets where opt-outs are applied:

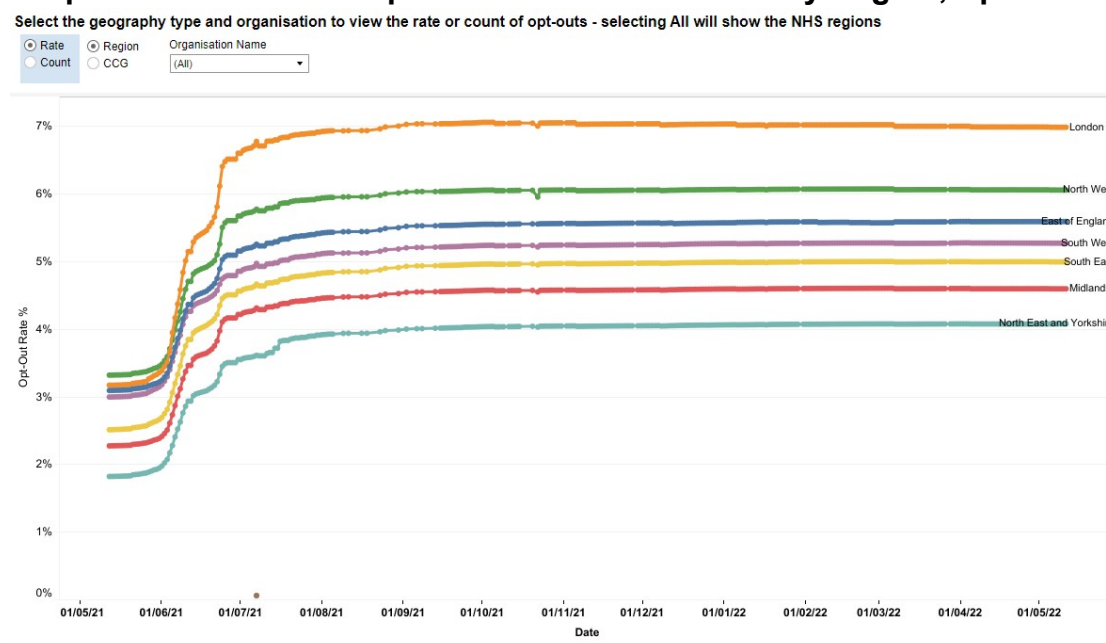
**Graph 1: National Data Opt-Out Rate Broken Down by 10 Year Age Bands, April 2022**



**Table 1: Number of National Data Opt-outs, by Age and Gender, April 2022**

Age	Gender	Opt-out	List size (population)	Opt-out Rate
0 to 9	Female	53,602	3,207,742	1.67
10 to 19	Female	108,265	3,467,646	3.12
20 to 29	Female	283,689	4,034,267	7.03
30 to 39	Female	361,982	4,490,352	8.06
40 to 49	Female	291,394	3,875,507	7.52
50 to 59	Female	291,166	4,052,355	7.19
60 to 69	Female	225,445	3,247,431	6.94
70 to 79	Female	162,631	2,652,903	6.13
80 to 89	Female	60,268	1,349,524	4.47
90 +	Female	10,138	350,409	2.89
0 to 9	Male	57,031	3,370,947	1.69
10 to 19	Male	108,457	3,632,404	2.99
20 to 29	Male	190,413	4,038,989	4.71
30 to 39	Male	271,161	4,685,181	5.79
40 to 49	Male	248,067	4,177,728	5.94
50 to 59	Male	238,266	4,211,726	5.66
60 to 69	Male	179,678	3,205,100	5.61
70 to 79	Male	134,472	2,388,840	5.63
80 to 89	Male	46,489	1,014,491	4.58
90 +	Male	5,563	172,203	3.23

## Graph 2: National Data Opt-Out Rate Broken Down by Region, April 2022



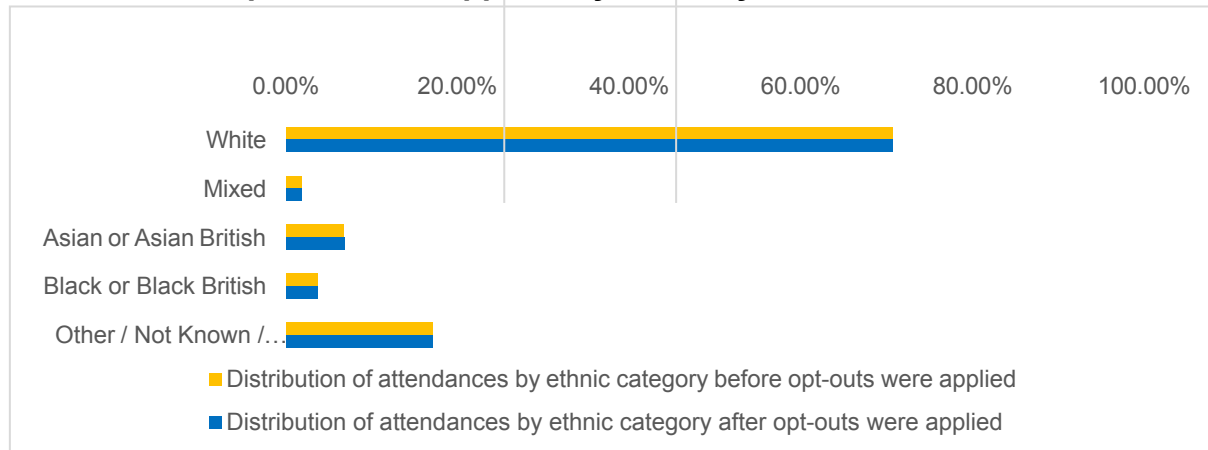
There were 3,328,566 national data opt-outs as at 1 April 2022. 5.4 per cent of the population registered with a GP practice have a national data opt-out. The National Data Opt-out Statistics are used to inform operational delivery, policy development and the management of organisational performance.

Further standalone analysis has been published previously, including an analysis of the [effect of opt-outs on the Hospital Episode Statistics \(HES\) Admitted Patient Care \(APC\), Outpatients \(OP\) and Accident & Emergency \(A&E\)](#). Although there was a reduction of 575,722 patients recorded attending A&E in 2017 when national data opt-outs were applied to the data (national data opt-outs taken as at November 13 2018), table 2 and chart 3 below show that the largest change in the distribution of patients attending A&E by ethnicity is less than 0.1 percentage points, indicating there was minimal change in the distribution of ethnicities with the removal of national data opt-outs.

**Table 2: Distribution by ethnicity of patients recorded attending A&E before and after national data opt-outs were applied, 2017-18**

Ethnicity	Distribution of attendances by ethnic category <u>before</u> opt-outs were applied	Distribution of attendances by ethnic category <u>after</u> opt-outs were applied	Percentage Point Difference
White	70.68%	70.68%	-0.00%
Mixed	1.78%	1.78%	-0.01%
Asian or Asian British	6.73%	6.79%	0.06%
Black or Black British	3.71%	3.66%	-0.05%
Other / Not Known / Not Stated	17.10%	17.09%	-0.01%

**Chart 3: Distribution of A&E attendances by ethnic category before and after National Data Opt-outs were applied, by Ethnicity, 2017-18**



However, your challenge has initiated further focus on understanding the impact of opt-outs and the opt-out population as compared to the national population. We are actively considering how to further explore this topic in greater depth.

*May 2022*