



Department for Transport

Search and Rescue Helicopter Statistics: Summary of User Feedback

Background information

As part of a review of the Search and Rescue Helicopter Statistics the Department for Transport conducted a user survey in March 2018. A total of 22 respondents completed the survey.

The aim of this survey was to understand if the Search and Rescue Helicopter (SARH) statistics continue to meet user needs, and whether the statistics are of a sufficient quality for purposes for which the data are used. Answers to the questions give insight into the usefulness, timeliness and clarity of the statistical publications, as well as understanding into how well the Department engages with users. The survey also asked for user views on proposed changes to the SARH statistics, including changes to the format and content of publications and interest in potential additional variables.

The majority (86%) of the 22 respondents stated that they were extremely or somewhat satisfied that the Search and Rescue Helicopter statistics were meeting their needs. 82% of the respondents stated that they were either extremely or somewhat confident that the statistics being produced were accurate and reliable.

Overall, these findings indicate that the SARH statistics broadly meet user needs and are of suitable quality for their uses. This gives us the confidence in pursuing the badging of the SARH statistics as National Statistics.

Where possible the department has responded to the suggestions made.

User views on the proposed changes have also been considered and the department has responded with the likely actions it plans to take.

In this publication

Respondent details.....	p1
Relevance of statistics	p2
Accuracy and timeliness.....	p3
Clarity.....	p4
Levels of engagement and importance.....	p4
Proposed changes to tables.....	p5-6
Proposed changes to the quarterly release.....	p6-7
Additional variables.....	p7
Interest in time series.....	p8

Respondents to the user survey

Fourteen respondents answered the question on what type of organisation they represent. The type of organisation predominantly consisted of search and rescue organisations. Of the two respondents who fell under the "Other" category, one represented a 'safety standby vessel' organisation located in North Sea and the second one represented a 'Police lead for Search and Rescue'.

Questions on quality and value of the statistics

The following questions set out to measure if the SARH statistics are meeting user needs and whether the statistics are in line with the requirements set out in the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#).

Question 1. Relevance

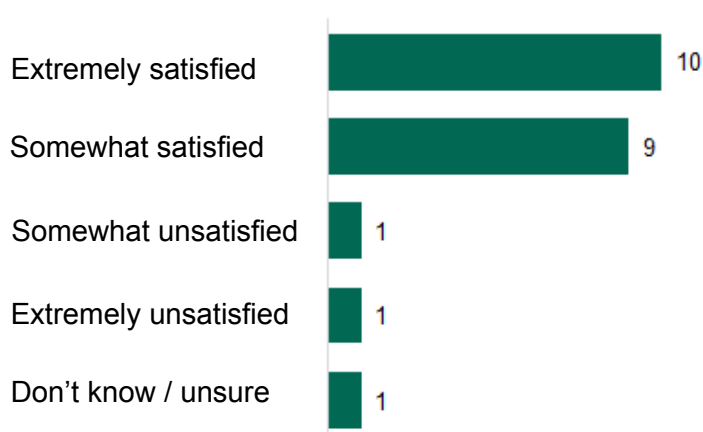
We asked: How satisfied are you in terms of the SARH statistics meeting your needs?

86% of respondents were either extremely satisfied or somewhat satisfied. One respondent stated that they are extremely unsatisfied with the relevance of these statistics, and provided the following reason, “No statistics for Irish Coast Guard helicopter taskings into Northern Ireland”. One respondent stated that they are somewhat unsatisfied with the relevance of the statistics, but did not provide an explanation.

Our response: We outlined our intention to remove the experimental designation of these statistics, providing that users are content with how well the statistics meet their needs. The majority of these responses were positive, which supports our intention to remove the experimental labelling, which we plan to do in the June publication subject to approval from the Office for Statistics Regulation.

In response to the user who expressed dissatisfaction to the relevance of these statistics; we don’t have access to the Irish Coastguard’s data, however we will explore potential avenues to see if we can get access to it. If we are able to do so we plan to incorporate these in the future releases.

Chart 1: Satisfaction that the SARH statistics are meeting the user’s needs

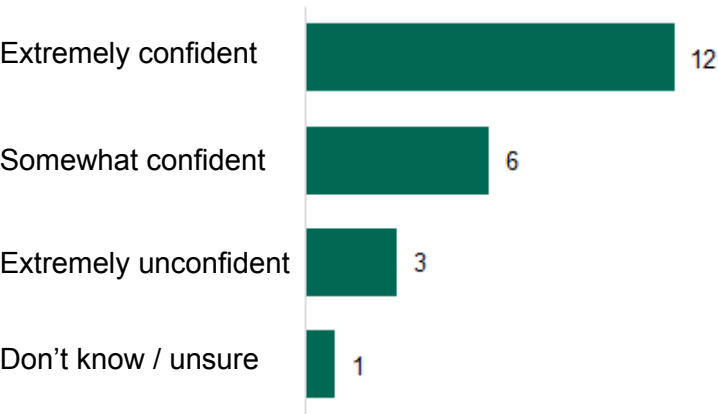


Question 2. Accuracy and reliability

We asked: Are you confident with the statistics we produce in terms of accuracy and reliability?

82% of respondents were either extremely confident or somewhat confident. Three of the respondents stated that they are extremely unconfident with the accuracy and reliability of the statistics. The reasons given were again related to not including helicopter taskings that are operated by the Irish Coastguards.

Chart 2: Accuracy and reliability of the SARH statistics



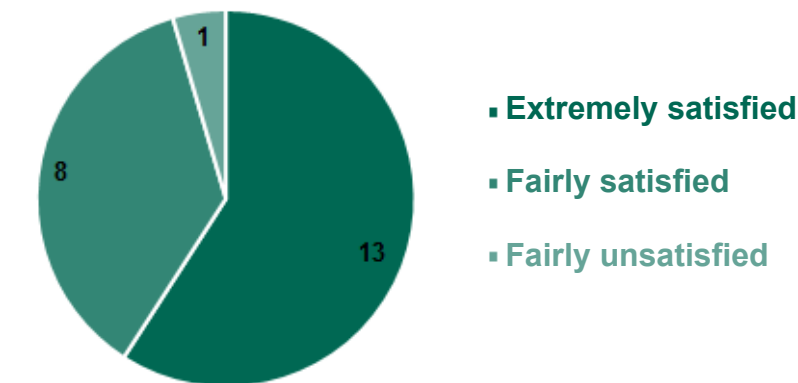
Question 3. Timeliness

We asked: The SARH statistics are generally published on a quarterly basis around two months after the end of the quarter. Are you satisfied with the timeliness of the publication?

The survey shows 95% of respondents are either extremely satisfied or fairly satisfied with the timeliness of the statistics. One respondent stated they are “fairly unsatisfied” and provided the following reason, “would be nice to have it more often, each month”.

Our response: A large majority of respondents were satisfied with the timeliness of the publications and we plan to maintain the publication of SARH statistics at around two months after receiving each quarter’s data.

Chart 3: Satisfaction with the timeliness of the publication



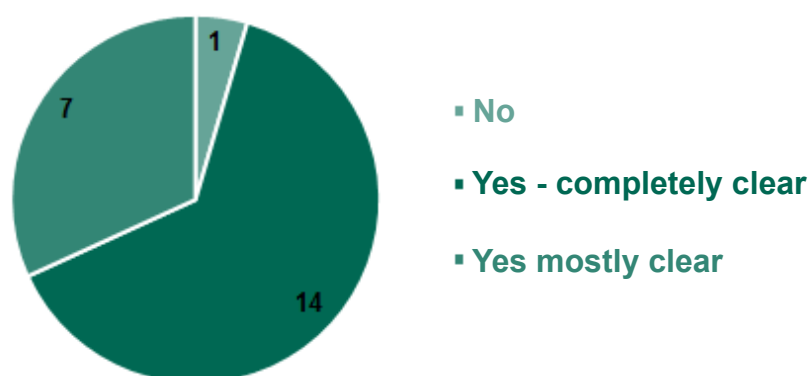
Question 4. Clarity

We asked: Is the way in which the statistics are presented and the definitions in the release sufficiently clear for your purpose?

The survey result shows 95% of respondents find the clarity of these statistics to be completely clear or mostly clear.

Our response: The one respondent who indicated that the presentation of these statistics and the definitions in the release as being not clear did not provide a reason as to why that is; based on this feedback we conclude that the statistics are currently sufficiently clear.

Chart 4: Is the way that the statistics are presented fit for purpose



Question 5. Levels of engagement

We said: Currently DfT and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency contact users of the SARH statistics on a quarterly basis, via email and social media (Twitter & Facebook) to make users aware of what is published, to showcase anything new and also to get feedback on the statistics we produce so we can better meet user needs.

Respondents were asked whether they were satisfied with the timeliness and means of communication. The survey result shows 100% of respondents were either very satisfied or fairly satisfied with the timeliness and the means of communication DfT have with them.

Our response: We plan to proceed with the same level of engagement in the future.

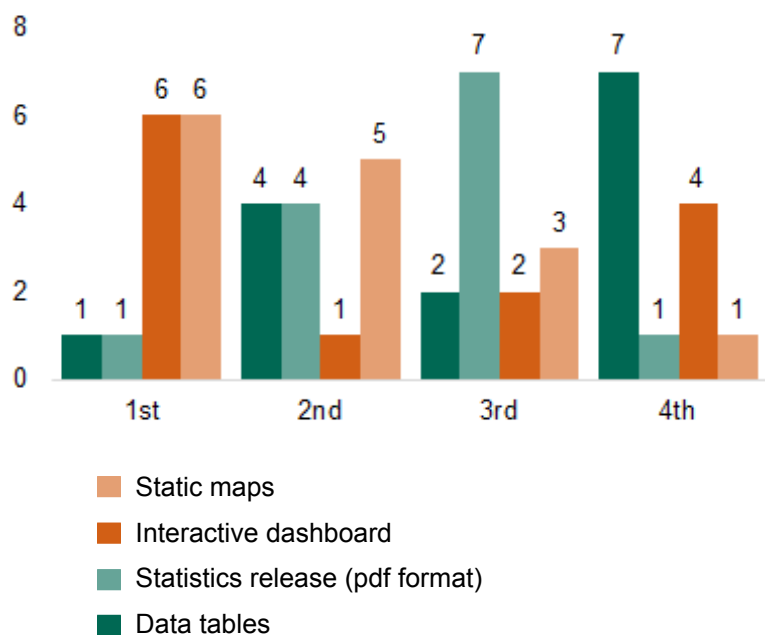
Question 6. Ranking in order of importance

We asked: Which of the following do you find the most useful? Please rank in order of importance. Where 1 is important and 4 not as important (in relation to the more important ranked ones)

43% of the respondents ranked the interactive dashboard as being the most useful, 43% the static maps, 7% the data tables and 7% the statistics release (PDF format).

Our response: The results suggests that users find the interactive dashboard and the static maps as being most useful, so our main focus will be on these two for the future quarterly publications.

Chart 5: The usefulness of the way in which statistics are presented



Questions on proposed changes to the statistics

The following questions set out to get user views on the changes we propose, in order to enhance the dissemination process and make the production of the SARH statistics more efficient (responses to the questions in this section were received from 15 users in total).

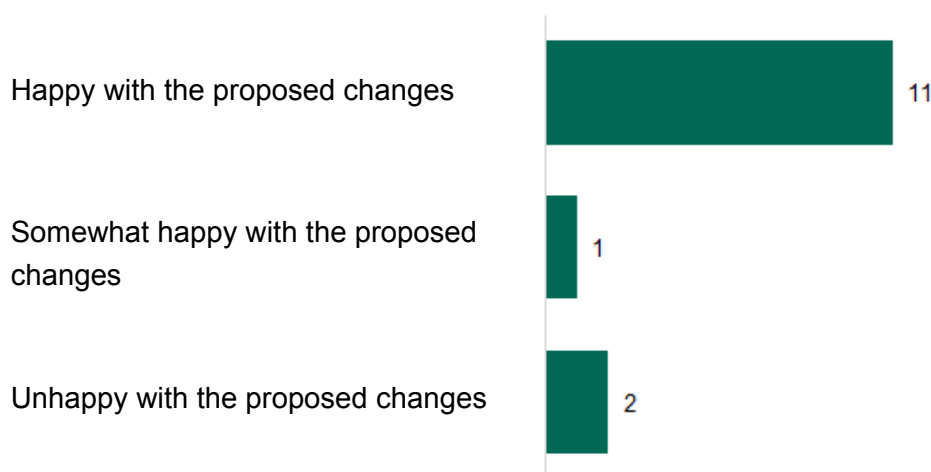
Question 7. Proposed reduction in number of tables published.

We said: As we now publish an interactive dashboard and a record level data table (SARH0112) on a quarterly basis, we are proposing to remove some of the data tables where we believe there is little user interest. In particular we intend to no longer update SARH0103 (location by month) and SARH0106 (tasking by duration). Please indicate your views on the proposed changes.

86% of the respondents were either happy or somewhat happy with the proposed changes. Two respondents were unhappy with the proposed changes, although only one provided a reason why, “As a professional mariner and volunteer on a lifesaving asset these stats help me understand the bigger picture.”

Our response: We intend to go ahead with the proposed changes on the basis that most respondents are happy and therefore plan to no longer provide the tables starting from the next release in June. Subject to continued approval from MCA, we will continue publishing the record level data (SARH0112), which will include the data contained in the two summary tables which will no longer be published.

Chart 6: Proposed changes to the number of tables



Question 8. Proposed changes to the format of quarterly release

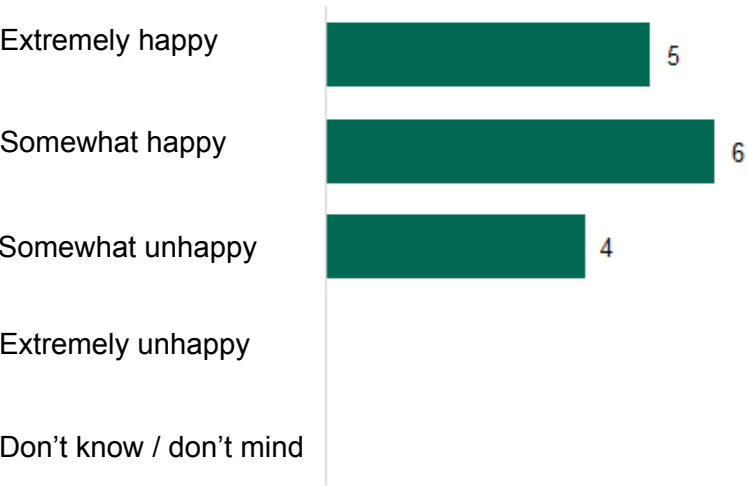
We said: This is the second quarterly release to incorporate the SARH interactive dashboard. We are proposing to change the nature of the quarterly release as the interactive dashboard gives access to a lot of information that overlaps with the quarterly publication. We are proposing to shorten the release based on some of the overlap between the release and dashboard. We plan to retain the static maps, but may not continue to produce a PDF document every quarter. We may publish the strengths and weaknesses on a separate document. We will update the dashboard and provide the underlying spreadsheet of incidents on a quarterly basis.

We asked: Are you happy with the proposed changes?

73% of the respondents (11 of 15) were either extremely happy or somewhat happy with the proposed changes to the format of the quarterly release. Four respondents were somewhat unhappy with the proposed changes. Only one respondent provided a reason which stated that although some vessels have access to the internet they would still find a PDF version of the publication useful, as this can be easily disseminated.

Our response: We intend to go ahead with the proposed changes to the format of the quarterly release on the basis that most respondents are happy, and no longer plan to include a PDF from August. However we will continue to review user feedback after making this change.

Chart 7: Proposed changes to the format of the quarterly release



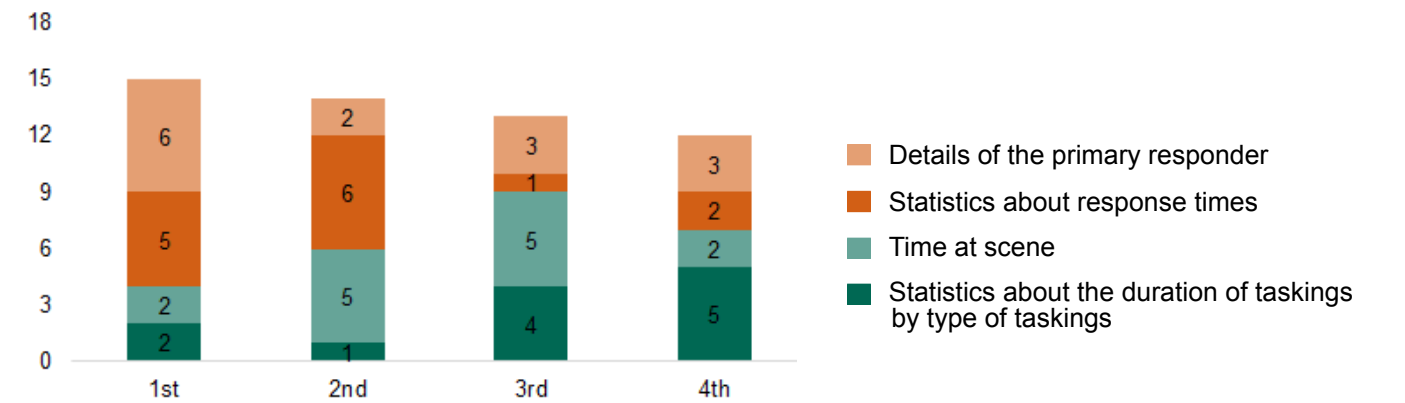
Question 9. Additional variables

We said: Over time transitioning to the new data source allowed us to address most user needs. The few that have not yet been incorporated will be outlined below. Please could you indicate whether these are still of interest by ranking the following variables in its order of importance. Where 1 is important and 4 not as important (in relation to the more important ranked ones). If there are still interests and where applicable we will aim to add in these extra variables in the annual release.

40% of the respondents ranked the ‘Details of the primary responder (for example the police force, ambulance, charity organisations and etc.)’ as being the variable with the most interest. 33% of the respondents ranked the variable ‘Statistics about response times, from the initial contact (phone call) to the helicopter taking off’ as being the variable with the second most interest.

Our response: We will consider adding the two variables of high interest as additional analysis for the future releases where this is possible. However this is entirely subject to the data quality being of a sufficient level, and currently the data owners (MCA and ARCC) do not believe this is good enough for publication of these variables.

Chart 8: Interest in the proposed additional variables



Question 10. Longer time series

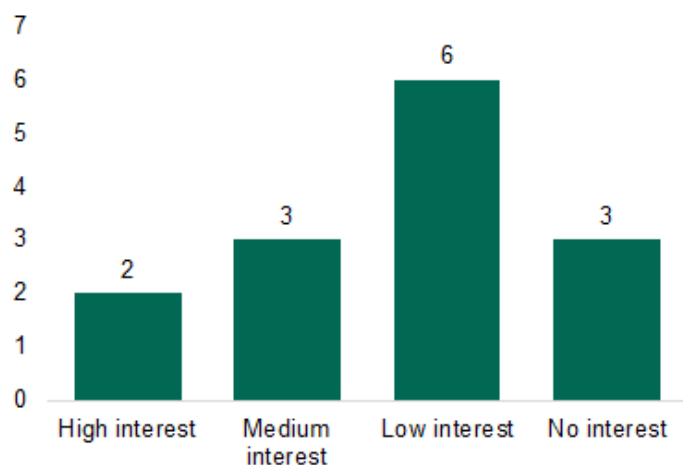
We said: As we publish the interactive dashboard now (<http://maps.dft.gov.uk/sarh-statistics/april-2015-to-December-2017/>) we are unsure if adding a longer time series in the bulletin would add any value to users of the statistics.

We asked: Would you be interested in a chart with a longer time series in the release?

64% of the respondents expressed either low interest or no interest in a chart with a longer time series in the release.

Our response: Although the majority (64%) of the respondents expressed little or no interest, we will still consider whether or not to include a section on this in the future as there was some interest expressed.

Chart 9: Interest in the proposed time series



We welcome feedback from the publication of this SARH User Survey. Please send any comments or feedback to: maritime.stats@dft.gov.uk



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