POPGROUP User Survey 2016

REPORT OF THE
POPGROUP USER SURVEY 2016

INTRODUCTION

The POPGROUP User Survey 2016 was conducted by the Local Government Association's Research and Information team in April-May 2016 on behalf of POPGROUP's Steering Committee.

A regular user survey was one of the conditions of the licence granted by the LGA to Edge Analytics in January 2015 to run POPGROUP, and the results will enable the LGA and steering committee to assess the effectiveness of the new licence model, monitor progress and plan future developments.

The survey was sent to all 68 local authority users in the UK on 25th April 2016 and at the close (20th May), responses had been received from 25 (37 per cent).

Given the overall response rate and the small number of respondents, the data should be regarded as providing an indicative rather than an exact picture of users as a whole. Moreover, not all users answered, or were required to answer, every question, so the response to individual questions varies.

SUMMARY

The main findings were as follows:

- 88 per cent of respondents had used POPGROUP over the last twelve months;

- The most commonly used 2015 data modules were population projections (95 per cent of respondents), mid-year estimates and change (81 per cent) and stage 1 household projections (73 per cent);

- Between 83 per cent and 95 per cent of respondent users, depending on the module, reported 2015 data modules as either very or fairly useful;

- The most used types of support were manual/software fixes (90 per cent), new population projections guide (82 per cent), Edge's email support (82 per cent) and the new household projections guide (73 per cent);

- Users generally found support to be either very or fairly useful, varying between 95 per cent for email support and 82 per cent for the household guide;

- 40 per cent of users thought that Edge's website was either not very or not at all useful. (Note: this equates to only four users.)

MAIN FINDINGS

### Use of POPGROUP

Around nine-out-of-ten respondents (88 per cent) had used POPGROUP over the last twelve months.

As far as you know, has your organisation used POPGROUP over the last twelve months?	Number	Per cent
Yes	22	88%
No	3	12%
Don't know	0	0%
Total	25	100%

Use of data modules

Those respondents who had used POPGROUP over the last twelve months were asked to gauge the usefulness of any data modules they had used, and to indicate whether they planned to use any which they had not already used. It should be noted that all the listed data modules were released in 2015, and so users may not yet have had time or occasion to use them.
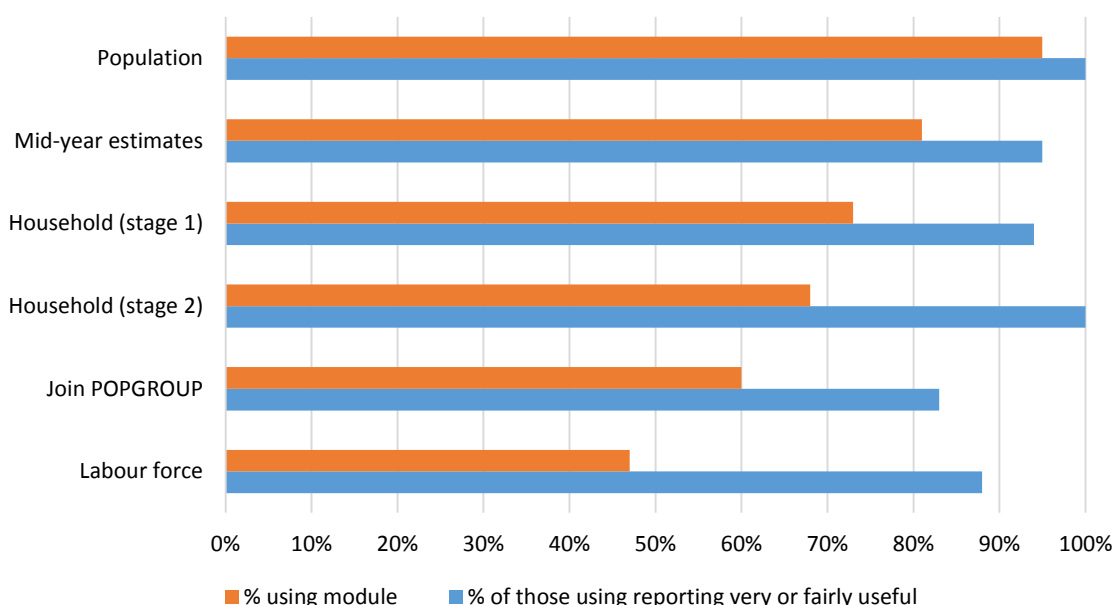
The proportion of respondents using data modules varied between 95 per cent (2012-based population projections) and 47 per cent (2011-based labour force projections, the most recent module). In each case, more than four-fifths of respondents found the module either very or fairly useful (highest for mid-year estimates, 95 per cent, and lowest for join POPGROUP models, 83 per cent). Aside from stage 1 household projections (6 per cent), no respondents reported any modules as either not very or not all useful.

Six of the nine respondents who had not yet used the labour force module reported an intention to use it over the next twelve months; otherwise small numbers of respondents indicated such an intent.

How useful have you found the following data modules over the last twelve months? If you have not used, please indicate whether you plan to use them over the next twelve months								
	Very useful	**Fairly useful**	**Not very useful**	**Not at all useful**	**Don't know**	**Total using (no.)**	**Total using (%)**	**Not used (no.)/ plan to use (no.)**
ONS 2012-based population projections	76%	24%	0%	0%	0%	21	95%	1 (0)
Mid-year estimates and change	71%	24%	0%	0%	6%	17	81%	4 (1)
CLG 2012-based household projections (Stage 1 England)	75%	19%	6%	0%	0%	16	73%	6 (2)
CLG 2012-based household projections (Stage 2 England)	87%	13%	0%	0%	0%	15	68%	7 (3)
Join POPGROUP models	58%	25%	0%	0%	17%	12	60%	8 (3)
2011-based labour force projections	50%	38%	0%	0%	13%	8	47%	9 (6)

POPGROUP support

Those respondents who had used POPGROUP over the last twelve months were asked to indicate the usefulness of various forms of POPGROUP support. It should be borne in mind that some types of support did not apply to most respondents because they took the form of one-off events (training courses and user group meeting) or because they were not available to all users (Edge's user panel), and hence the figures should be treated with caution.
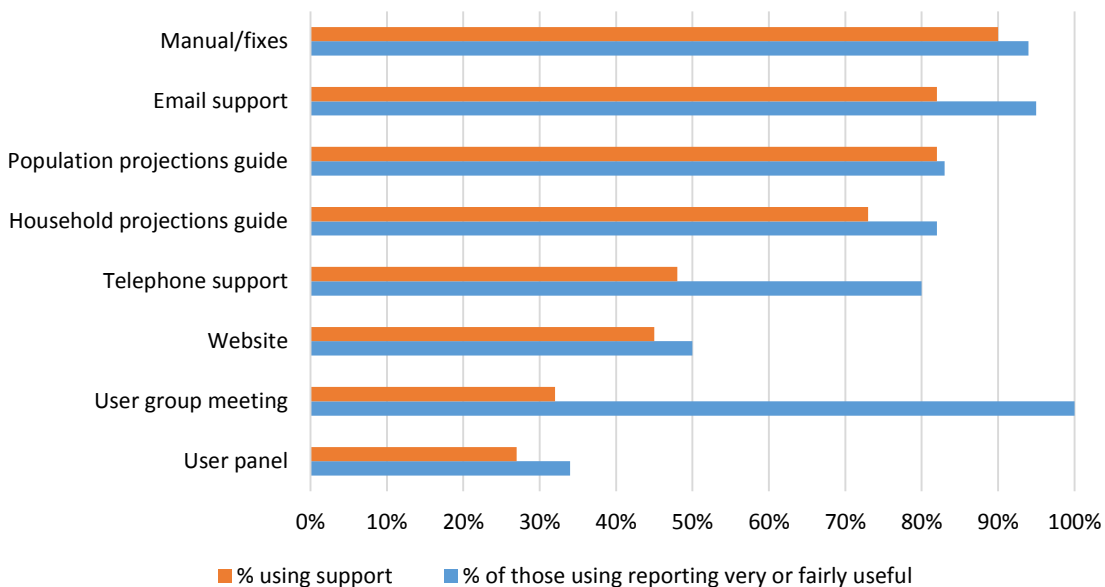
The four most commonly used types of support were manual/software fixes (90 per cent of respondents), new population projections guide (82 per cent), email support from Edge (82 per cent) and the new household projections guide (73 per cent).

For each of these four, the proportion reporting support to be either very or fairly useful was in excess of four-fifths, varying between 95 per cent (email support) and 82 per cent (household guide). None reported them to be not very or not at all useful.

Other types of support had been used by only between 48 per cent (telephone support) and 27 per cent (user panel) of respondents. Usefulness ratings were still generally high, the sole exception being Edge's website which 40 per cent reported to be either not very or not at all useful.

How useful have you found the following types of support currently available to POPGROUP users?	Very useful	Fairly useful	Not very useful	Not at all useful	Don't know	Total using (no.)	Total using (%)	Not used/ not appli. (no.)
Manual/software fixes	68%	26%	0%	0%	5%	19	90%	2
New population projections guide	50%	33%	0%	0%	17%	18	82%	4
Email support from Edge	78%	17%	0%	0%	6%	18	82%	4
New household projections guide	44%	38%	0%	0%	19%	16	73%	6
Telephone support from Edge	60%	20%	0%	10%	10%	10	48%	11
Edge's website	0%	50%	20%	20%	10%	10	45%	12
User group meeting (December 2015)	86%	14%	0%	0%	0%	7	32%	15
Edge's user panel	17%	17%	0%	0%	67%	6	27%	16

Note: respondents were also asked about the training courses held in 2015 in Manchester and Leeds, but only 5%/14% of respondents respectively had attended and so the results are not shown due to the very low base.

Overall satisfaction

Overall, two-thirds of respondents who had used POPGROUP were very satisfied with Edge's service over the last twelve months (67 per cent) and just over a quarter (29 per cent) were fairly satisfied. None were either not very or not at all satisfied.

Respondents were invited to write-in comments about their response. Ten did so. The main theme was Edge's helpfulness and responsiveness (7). One expressed a desire for more telephone support in preference to emails.

Overall, how satisfied have you been with the service provided by Edge over the last twelve months?	Number	Per cent
Very satisfied	14	67%
Fairly satisfied	6	29%
Not very satisfied	0	0%
Not at all satisfied	0	0%
Don't know	1	5%
Total	21	100%

General comments

All respondents were invited to write-in any additional comments about POPGROUP, particularly the types of support that would be most helpful. Sixteen did so.

The most common recurring themes were the need for a guide to small area forecasting, particularly at ward level (4 respondents) and the usefulness of existing guides (4). Other comments suggested a screen-sharing facility to assist remote support, a need for more training courses, and possible problems arising from organisations moving to virtual environments and Microsoft 365.

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