Older People’s Home Care user experience survey - 2008/09

1. Introduction/Background

1.1 In 2000/01, Councils with Social Services Responsibilities (CSSRs) in England were asked by the Department of Health (DH) to carry out nationally comparable surveys of social services clients and to return summaries of their responses to the Housing and Social Care Information Centre (HSCIC). At the time, the DH made it clear that the 2000/01 survey was but a first step in a broader programme of surveys of Personal Social Services (PSS) User Experiences that would include coverage of more users, carers and client groups.

1.2 In 2002/03, a survey of elderly home care service users took place and in 2003/04 Councils carried out a survey of physically disabled and sensory impaired users. The survey of the children in need aged 10 or over then followed in 2004/05 (carried out by the Department of Education and Skills). In 2005/06, the DH requested survey tested satisfaction with home care provision among older people aged 65 or over who are receiving care in their own homes. In 2007/08, CSSRs carried out the first national survey of Adult Social Services covering users aged 18 and over who are living in their own home and had received an equipment or minor adaptations funded in part or entirely by Social Services. This year’s survey (2008/09) was developed to learn more about whether or not home care received by older people (defined as anyone aged 65 or over) is helping them to live safely and independently in their own home.

1.3 This paper sets out how the survey was carried out by RBKC Social Services and reports on the results.

2. DH guidance on the survey

2.1 The DH provided guidance on how the survey should be conducted. They recommended the use of postal questionnaires designed by the DH for most service users with telephone and face-to-face approaches used where necessary. Two versions of the questionnaires were made available:

(i) A shorter version containing the core questions from the DH.

(ii) An extended version designed to form the basis of a research study being undertaken by the Personal Social Services Research Unit (PSSRU) at the University of Kent.

The DH survey guidance stipulated that Local Authorities were free to:

(i) Survey a sample of service users and

(ii) Use the shorter or longer version of the questionnaire for the survey if they so wished.
3. How the survey was undertaken in RBKC

3.1 The survey was conducted early this year (February-May 2008) by officers in the Policy and Performance Team within the Housing, Health and Adult Social Care (HHASC) Business Group working closely with officers of the Home Care Service. We surveyed all eligible service users in receipt of Home Care services (924) using the core questionnaire. A total of 560 completed or partially completed questionnaires were received amounting to a response rate of 61%. This compares with the response rate of 63% achieved when the Home Care user experience survey was last carried out in 2005/06.

4. Summary of the results

4.1 Appendix 1 contains a detailed summary of the survey results for each of the questions asked. Overall, 55% of respondents are satisfied with the help that they receive in their own home (from Social Services) and 32% are quite satisfied. A total of 85% say that their care workers always or usually come at suitable times, 81% of participants maintain that they are kept informed by their home care service about changes in their home care and 89% state that their care workers always or nearly always do the things that they want done. Asked whether their care workers are in a rush, 44% say that they are never in a rush compared to the 37% who say that their care workers are sometimes in a rush and the 19% who maintain that they are always or often in a rush. In terms of whether care workers arrive on time, 81% agree that they are always or usually on time whilst 62% say they never spend less time than they are supposed to. 92% of service users always or nearly always see the same care workers and 92% are always or usually happy with the way their care workers treat them.

4.2 The survey results have been achieved amidst a re-configuration of the home care provision which would have affected service users. This has involved a substantial programme of work, including a review of the in-house service, a review of block contracts and spot purchasing, changing the charging structure and reviewing information, monitoring and finance systems. The number of home care providers used by the Council has been reduced, with the removal of a number of smaller providers for varying reasons, and the need for specialist providers has been rationalised. Better liaison and monitoring arrangements have been implemented with the remaining providers. The procurement plan for the Home Care service is such that it now has block contracts with two providers, with the intention of improving quality but maintaining costs.

5. National Indicator (NI)/survey results

5.1 Each year, the commission of Social Care Inspection (CSCI) now Care Quality Commission (CQC) ensures that one or more of the indicators in the Performance Assessment Framework (PAF) set are generated from the results of the user survey that Councils have been asked to conduct.
The results from all Local Authorities are then benchmarked to assess and compare performance across Authorities. The survey results are also used by Councils to improve service delivery.

5.2 For this year (2008/09), the DH has indicated that NI127 (self reported experience of social care users) will not be populated from the 2008/09 survey. Instead, NI127 would be populated from 2009/10 onwards.

6. Conclusion/General comments/observation

6.1 Given that the DH guidance allowed for a sample of service users to be surveyed, it is possible that some local authorities would have surveyed a smaller sample of service users. The Royal Borough’s action to survey all service users using the core questionnaire could be considered as a comprehensive approach aimed at obtaining data based on the views of a wider section of service users.

6.2 The survey results will be reported to the HSCIC at the end of May 2009. A newsletter will be produced to feedback the results of the survey to those who took part. The results will also be shared with staff and Home Care providers and will be used to improve service delivery.

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