NHS Patient Survey Programme: Engagement Strategy

January 2016
Introduction

This document sets out how we will encourage and enable people who use NHS Patient Surveys to work with us to develop and improve its provision. It is informed by the Care Quality Commission’s (CQC) public engagement strategy, however it represents the engagement we undertake specifically in support of the Patient Survey programme. Information about progress we have recently made in reaching out to users (and potential users) of statistics can be found in our ‘Survey Output Users Report’.

Context

**CQC’s 2015 Public Engagement strategy** made a commitment to make sure people from a wider range of population groups are enabled and encouraged to tell CQC about their views and experiences of care in a way that meets their individual needs. This supports CQC’s regulatory activities. However, recognising the distinctive role of the Patient Survey Programme, and our desire to ensure statistics users have a say on programme planning, coverage and reporting, our Engagement Strategy is important in committing to how we will facilitate this.

The Patient Survey Programme provides robust, large scale feedback on the experiences of patients receiving healthcare. This is used by CQC to inform assessments of the quality of services and help target areas for improvement. Statistics are also used by a range of other stakeholders such as NHS England, Department of Health, Trust Development Authority and of course, NHS Trusts themselves. Other statistics users include local authorities, academics and researchers and third sector organisations.

By encouraging and enabling the people who use survey information to work with us to develop and improve the programme, we will enhance the public value of our statistics.

Current approach

Since its inception in 2004, we have regularly engaged people in the development of the survey programme. Engagement has tended to happen on a survey-by-survey basis when developing new surveys or redeveloping older ones, involving stakeholders with service specific knowledge that is utilised in assessments of utility and value, and the design of methodology and instruments.

For example, in developing the 2014 children and young people’s survey, children and young people were involved in designing the questionnaires and reports alongside representatives from NHS trusts and other external organisations.
Decisions about the overall programme however have been limited to more ‘expert users’ usually. For example working with key stakeholders such as NHS England and colleagues across CQC and NHS trusts, to determine gaps in survey coverage where new surveys could be developed, and confirming the frequency of surveys.

This is now changing. Our ‘Survey Output Users Report’ outlines work we have recently undertaken, reaching out to thousands of individuals and organisations to offer them the opportunity to keep up-to-date with our work, contribute to forthcoming consultations, and tell us what they are already doing with survey statistics. This includes use of StatsUserNet, a website created to encourage communication between users and producers of Official Statistics.

**How we will engage**

We recognise a need to engage more widely with a broader range of people so we are more likely to make the right decisions and continue to deliver a product that meets our users’ needs. We want to understand how people are using statistics generated by our surveys and the types of decisions they inform.

What we will continue to do:

- We will continue to work with individuals within and without the health sector, with relevant experience and knowledge, when developing individual surveys. We will ensure methodologies are fit for purpose and that we are asking questions about relevant and important areas.
- We will continue to test all questionnaires with patients and service users before they are used in a survey, and to revise them in line with feedback given, to increase reliability and validity.

What we will change:

- We want to ensure that users’ views are embedded throughout the programme, including the planning of the survey programme (e.g. which surveys and how frequently), identifying areas for improvement and how results should be disseminated. This must include feeding into decisions affecting the scope and delivery of the programme as a whole.
- We will reach out directly to people from all the groups listed in Fig. 1 overleaf. We will work with these groups to understand the different ways they use the outputs from surveys, and their different needs to ensure all are represented.
- We will identify specific users outside of the core health and social care system and invite them to help us with our work and, over time, we will expand this reach to ensure frequent communication and invitations to
consultations and feedback are extended to as many users and interested individuals as possible.

- We will publish the results of engagement activities, with actions we are taking on the basis of results, on the CQC website.

Who we will engage

The diagram below shows the full range of groups of users we will seek to draw into our work and decision making around the programme, with examples of some of the groups we are currently inviting to work with us. When people and groups respond to invitations or proactively make contact with us, we will add their details to a ‘Statistics users database’ which will be the source for making future contact. The results of responses to invitations so far can be seen in our ‘Survey Output Users Report’

Fig. 1 Types of Users of Survey Outputs

- Expert users
  - NHS trusts
  - NHS England, Department of Health, Trust Development Authority, Health and Social Care Information Centre
  - Academic and research organisations
  - Clinical Commissioning Groups, Health and Well Being Boards, Commissioning Support Units, Oversight and Scrutiny Committees

- Intermediate users
  - Voluntary/charity organisations
  - Professional bodies and royal colleges
  - Local and national Healthwatch
  - Media commentators

- General public
  - Patients and service users
  - Patient groups
  - Interested members of the public
How will we engage the public, providers, and professionals who use our survey outputs

We need to engage a wider range of people to ensure views are embedded throughout the programme, including the planning of the survey cycle, identifying areas for improvement and how results should be disseminated.

To facilitate this wider engagement, we have set out below the different types of engagement we will use (Fig 2). The inner circles in the diagram represent more ‘intensive’ levels of engagement, and therefore will be accessible to smaller numbers of people/organisations, than outer rings.

Fig 2. Engagement channels
Participation

Participation reflects the most intensive form of engagement we will facilitate. We will create opportunities to develop surveys in a more collaborative manner to ensure our products reflect users' experiences and needs. Methods will include:

- Advisory Groups will be created to formally contribute to decisions about individual surveys, and advise on particular project areas. Project areas may include redesign of survey outputs and methods of analysis. It will be necessary to ensure groups include individuals from each of the three user types mentioned in Fig 1 (expert users, intermediate users and members of the public).

- We will continue to encourage and enable children and young people to engage with us through bi-annual meetings of a CQC Children and Young People's Advisory Group, supplemented by regular online engagement as required. Through face-to-face meetings, children and young people are able to directly feedback and help shape survey developments and outputs.

- Online engagement with local Healthwatch representatives and attendance at bi-annual Healthwatch advisory group meetings co-ordinated by CQC, as required.

- Regular engagement with CQC ‘Experts by experience’ through meetings supplemented by online engagement opportunities as required

- Continued use of interviews and focus groups when developing new questionnaires or redesigning on-going ones.

Consultation

- We will encourage and enable people to support key decisions and development activities by engaging those individuals who are on our growing database of statistics users and stakeholders. This includes anyone who has contacted the Patient.Survey@cqc.org.uk mailbox, and those who have accessed patient survey data from the UK Data Archive based at the University of Essex. It also includes those who have told us they wish to be involved as a result of a large scale exercise recruiting members of the wider community.

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1 Experts by Experience are people with experience of using care services who have agreed to work with CQC work e.g. taking part in CQC Inspections
• While our database will form the basis for inviting responses to consultations, we will also publicise consultation exercises on StatsUserNet, a website enabling communication between users and producers of official statistics.

• We will work with CQC Engagement colleagues when running consultations and make use of the numerous well established engagement channels including:
  o Bulletins
  o Social Media
  o Online communities
  o Events and exhibitions programme
  o Usability testing
  o Voluntary and community sector networks
  o Local Healthwatch and statutory group networks
  o Webinars
  o Commissioned focus groups

All consultation materials will be available on the CQC NHS Patient Surveys website, meaning access would also be available to any user not already on our database of contacts.

The types of decision we will consult about include:
  o asking for input on decisions around resource and statistical planning
  o requirements and proposals for presentation of results and publications
  o prioritising areas for new surveys

When consulting with users, we will undertake to offer a minimum of four weeks for responses to be received. Once these have been reviewed by the team we will publish our response and agreed actions on the website, which will also be sent directly to all consultation participants.

Feedback at point of access

• The Surveys section of the CQC website contains links to all England level and NHS trust level results for recent NHS Patient Surveys. On this site, users can download datasets for a given survey to use for their own analyses. We intend to offer individuals downloading the data at this point the chance to: sign up to be added to the statistics users database and feedback on the ease of access, format and utility of the data they have accessed. This feedback at point of access may be used for supplementary feedback gathering exercises if these are deemed useful for particular surveys.
User feedback/ complaints

- We welcome feedback on our work at any time, and the Patient.Survey@cqc.org.uk mailbox exists to capture this, as well as providing a point at which to make requests or raise queries. The mailbox contact is included in survey publications. The mailbox is shared across the Surveys Team to enable quick response to queries.

Results of feedback will be collated and published twice a year alongside feedback from other engagement channels.

Information

We will encourage and enable a wide range of people to hear about opportunities to engage with us via:

- **Dedicated newsletter:**

  All statistics users on our database will be offered the opportunity to sign up for a regular Survey Programme newsletter (via email) that will keep them informed as to programme and survey developments, forthcoming consultation opportunities, publication updates and any news about use of survey data or survey results. Newsletters will be sent at least four times per year.

  We will continue to invite people to sign up for our updates and to tell us about their data use, including though use of a ‘pop-up’ survey that helps people sign up quickly.

- **General CQC bulletins, newsletters and online communities:**

  Where news is significant e.g. results of a new survey are available, or a consultation opportunity is available we will continue with current publicity via CQC’s provider, professional, public and health services newsletters and the public and provider online communities. As appropriate social media e.g. Twitter, will continue to be used.
Online conferences:

We will also continue to deliver online conferences to NHS trusts and their approved contractors before the launch of each survey, providing briefing about the forthcoming survey(s) and offering opportunities to feedback directly.

CQC Website:

A copy of the newsletter will also be made available on the surveys webpage.

Your views on this strategy

This document sets out our commitment to involve statistics users and those who would like to be more involved in our work. We welcome any feedback you might have about our strategy at Patient.Survey@cqc.org.uk