



Health & Social Care  
Information Centre

# **Adult Social Care Carers' Survey 2012-13**

## **Survey Feedback Report**

**October 2013**

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<b>Version:</b>	<b>1.1</b>
<b>Date of issue</b>	<b>October 2013</b>

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# 1. Executive Summary

This paper provides feedback given by councils as part of their 2012-13 Adult Social Care Carers' Survey data return. As part of the survey, councils are asked to comment on the guidance and a number of other aspects in relation to the way the survey is administered.

The Carers' survey was first piloted on a voluntary basis in 2009-10, when 90 out of 152 councils (59%) participated. The 2012/13 survey was a national survey with all councils<sup>1</sup> required to take part.

There were 58 questions in the 2009-10 pilot survey, some of which were optional, the 2012-13 survey contains 27 questions. The survey was developed in response to feedback from the pilot. Only 16 of the questions were identical in both surveys in terms of being mandatory in both surveys, their wording and possible responses.

The findings are based on the Your Feedback section which was submitted as part of the data return on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2013. 148 from 151 councils answered at least one element of this section.

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<sup>1</sup> Due to the size of their eligible populations City of London and Isles of Scilly are not required to run the survey

## Key findings

- 126 councils had a large enough sample size to give a 95 per cent confidence interval for an estimate of 50 per cent to within +/- 5 per cent
- 47 councils reported that they contacted their entire eligible population, rather than using a sample
- 64 per cent of councils said they found the guidance easy or very easy to use
- 75 per cent of councils said that they found the sample size calculator easy or very easy to use
- 22 per cent councils modified some of the questions, predominantly Question 5 and Question 6 by increasing the number of available response options
- 38 per cent councils added questions to the survey, such as sources of support for carers, a more in-depth look at health and wellbeing, and GP awareness
- Council concerns were mostly over the timing of the Carers' Survey, and that it occurred quite close to the Adult Social Care Survey, thereby putting significant pressure on their resources
- Feedback from some carers said that they did not classify themselves as carers, due to their familial relationship with the person being cared for

***SSUSG did not identify any issues for improvement for the 20014-15 Carers' Survey.***

## 2. Feedback Survey Results

### Eligible Population

All participating councils completed the required elements of the Eligible Population worksheet, with most having used the sample size calculator. 33 per cent councils reported they sent the questionnaire to their total eligible population; this is in contrast to the Adult Social Care Survey of 2012-13 where 10 per cent of councils stated they had done this.

### Feedback on using the guidance and sample size calculator

Table 2.1 shows 64 per cent of councils stated they found the guidance around generating the sample either Easy or Very Easy to use. However, 7 per cent said the guidance for creating the sample caused them difficulties with some feeling the process was too long or complex.

There were also some issues raised where there were small numbers of carers and the problems this generated when assembling the sample. Notably, some of the councils who reported this were the ones who surveyed their entire eligible population.

Table 2.1 also shows that the majority of councils were able to use the sample size calculator with relative ease with 75 per cent of councils said they found it either Very Easy or Easy to use.

The most common reported difficulty in this area was about the computing resources used by the Sample size calculator which is slow and could crash on occasions.

There were also positive comments relating to the calculator's ease of use and usefulness.

**Table 2.1 How easy was it to follow the guidance and use the sample size calculator spreadsheet?**

How easy was it to follow the guidance and use the sample size calculator?	Percentage of respondents	
	Ease of using the guidance	Ease of using the sample size calculator
Very easy	23	39
Easy	41	36
Neither Easy or Difficult	28	13
Difficult	6	8
Very Difficult	1	4
<b>Ease of using the guidance respondents = 144</b>		
<b>Ease of using the sample size calculator respondents = 138</b>		

## Response Rate

One approach to increasing response rates is to offer incentives to those who have been sent the questionnaire. 11 councils (8 per cent) indicated that they had done this and had all offered entries into prize draws, typically for a high street shopping voucher.

145 councils responded to the question 'What did you do to chase non-responders?' with 17 saying they did not chase non-respondents either due to having already met sample size requirements or a local decision due to resources. Table 2.2 below shows a breakdown of methods employed and that the most common form of follow-up is by post.

**Table 2.2 What did you do to chase non responders?**

	2012-13
<b>How did you do to chase non-responders?</b>	Percentage of Respondents
<b>Post</b>	<b>89</b>
<b>Email</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Phone</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Interview</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Total number of respondents = 145</b>	

1. Responses do not add up to 100 per cent as respondents could select more than one answer
2. Only includes responses where follow-up was conducted

## Engagement with minority groups

Table 2.3 below shows for the councils that engaged with minority groups and the distribution of methods used. 80 councils stated that they engaged with ethnic minority groups and of these 16 said they had used more than one method.

26 per cent of councils who did engage did so by using the translated versions of the questionnaires provided by the HSCIC and only 7 per cent of councils indicated that they chose to have the questionnaire translated locally. The second most popular method of engagement (27 per cent) was having a friend or family member provide the interpretation.

52 per cent of councils stated that they used 'Other' methods to engage but when asked to expand on this, many described options already listed.

**Table 2.3 How did you encourage engagement with minority groups in your area?**

	2012-13
<b>How did you encourage engagement with minority groups in your area?</b>	Percentage of Respondents
<b>HSCIC translations</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Locally commissioned translations</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Interpreter via telephone</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Face to face interview</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Friend /family translation</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>Total number of respondents = 80</b>	

1. Percentages do not sum to 100%. This chart includes double counting where councils used more than one method



## Additional questions

As with previous social care surveys, the majority of councils did not modify any of the questions. Table 2.4 below shows where making changes to the questionnaire was adopted by councils, Adding questions was more widely used than modifying (38 per cent and 22 per cent respectively).

**Table 2.4 Local alterations made to the questionnaire?**

		2012/13
Response		Percentage of Respondents
<b>Did you add any questions?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>38</b>
	<b>No</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>Did you modify any questions?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>22</b>
	<b>No</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>Total number of respondents to adding questions = 144</b>		
<b>Total number of respondents to modifying questions = 145</b>		

There were a variety of questions added to the survey. However, certain key themes stood out, such as:

- Support for carers: GP, support groups/programmes, counselling, voluntary organisations, family, friends
- Health and wellbeing, covering carers breaks, free time (to themselves) and financial pressures
- GP awareness of caring role
- Benefits awareness

The two questions modified the most were Q5 (support or services used by the cared for person in the last 12 months) and Q6 (support or services used by the carer in the last 12 months) to increase the available options. As per the guidance, councils made minor alterations to other questions to fit in with local practices.

## Feedback from councils

Within the feedback section of the return, free text boxes were provided for councils to provide feedback on the survey.

Councils had several concerns, the most notable of which was that the Carers' Survey and the Adult Social Care Survey were released quite close to each other and this put additional burden on councils. Requests were made to ensure that the surveys did not overlap and to allow sufficient time between surveys.

It was also felt that there could be some investment made in developing an online version of the survey, which it was thought would reduce costs and burden.

There was also a feeling that the calculation methodology for ASCOF measure for Outcome 3B (question 4 on the survey) is under-reporting the satisfaction levels of carers by excluding 'quite satisfied' responses from the calculation.

Other things that councils noted are:

- Some councils do not collect data on sexual orientation
- Some carers do not want their personal information kept on record therefore information for such people is limited.

## Feedback from users

There was also a section of the form which collected comments from survey respondents.

Users sent in feedback with several key messages, predominantly that not everybody surveyed classed themselves as carers due to their familial relationship to the cared for person. They also felt that they felt the survey was too long. Some users were unclear whether they should complete the survey due to the cared for person having recently gone in to residential care, and suggested it could be made clearer in the survey and the guidance that this is for people who are or have recently been carers. It was also noted that in some cases the carer may care for more than one person and that this is not recorded.

It was felt that some of the questions were poorly worded, and that there was not enough focus on the impact on the family life of the carer, such as always being on duty (24/7), or access to respite.

A number of respondents across many councils felt that the survey was a waste of time and money and that account was not taken of the time constraints of filling in the survey and carrying out caring duties, and that for some the 20 minutes that was recommended to fill in the form was unrealistic.

**Published by the Health and Social Care Information Centre  
Part of the Government Statistical Service**

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