

# Social care user surveys newsletter

## April 2014

Welcome to the first edition of a newsletter which we hope will keep you up to date with news and events connected with the Health and Social Care Information Centre (HSCIC) social care surveys.

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## 1. About the Social Services User Survey Group (SSUSG)

### Purpose

The SSUSG was set up in 2003 by the Department of Health (DH) to recommend a programme of social services user experience surveys. The group oversees these surveys, developing their content and advising on the methodology.

The two social care surveys that are currently overseen by the HSCIC are the Survey Personal Social Services Adult Social Care Survey (ASCS) and the Personal Social Services Survey of Adult Carers in England (SACE). Both of these surveys were designed by the SSUSG, the former being first run in 2010-11 and the latter being based on an initial design from the Personal Social Services Research Unit (PSSRU) (see [http://www.pssru.ac.uk/pdf/dp2643\\_2.pdf](http://www.pssru.ac.uk/pdf/dp2643_2.pdf)), having first taken place in 2012-13 (with a pilot survey having run in 2009-10). Whereas the ASCS is annual, the SACE is currently biennial and is not taking place for 2013-14.

Recommendations for user experience surveys were made by the SSUSG to the Outcomes and Information Development Board (OIDB) which is jointly chaired by Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) and DH. However, as of April 2014 new governance arrangements are in place; namely, the SSUSG reports to the National Data Collections Programme Board, which reports to OIDB.

### Membership

The SSUSG consists of representatives from DH, the HSCIC, Councils, the Care Quality Commission (CQC), ADASS and PSSRU. The HSCIC acts as the secretariat for the SSUSG, with Katharine Robbins being the Chair, and the Local Authority Lead is Louise Johnstone from Cumbria County Council.

The names and contact details of the SSUSG members, as of April 2014, are shown at: <http://www.hscic.gov.uk/socialcare/ssusg>.

### More information

You can find further details about this group, including its terms of reference and papers, at: <http://www.hscic.gov.uk/socialcare/ssusg>.

There is also an online forum for the survey and SSUSG at GovX that can be found at: <https://govx.socitm.net/spaces/ssusg/>. The forum allows members to post questions, thereby intending to share information and experiences.

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## 2. Resources and materials available for surveys

Our website holds information and resources designed to aid councils undertake the survey process.

Information, such as the need for these social care surveys and the uses of the surveys and the results, as well as this newsletter, can be found at: <http://www.hscic.gov.uk/socialcare/usersurveys>.

More details and resources which are specific to each survey and updated each year are also available. Such information for the 2013-14 ASCS is at:

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<http://www.hscic.gov.uk/article/3383/Adult-Social-Care-user-survey-guidance---2013-14>, and the following list details what you can find here.

- Guidance for councils, relating to the whole survey process.
- A sample size calculator which councils may use when drawing their sample.
- Questionnaires that councils should distribute to the service users in their sample. There are several versions of the questionnaire, including, in the case of the ASCS, a questionnaire for service users resident in the community and one for those in residential or nursing care, easy-read versions and large print versions.
- Translated questionnaires in fourteen languages.
- Interview scripts for councils wishing to conduct the survey in the form an interview, by telephone or face-to-face.
- Examples of forms and letters, such as a translation request sheet, reminder letters to complete sent questionnaires, consent forms and letters to check capacity of respondents.
- The data return file, which councils should use to submit their data to us.

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### 3. Provisional and final publications

For each of the two surveys, we publish two reports, along with their associated annexes, every time they take place (annually for the ASCS and biennially in the case of the SACE). The first contains provisional data and the second contains final data. The provisional data do not go through validation checks, other than those which are built into the data return file, whereas the final data are subject to more validation checks undertaken here at the HSCIC. We understand the importance of the data being accurate and also being made available in a timely manner. This is one of the reasons for publishing provisional data; to strike a balance between accuracy and timeliness.

For the 2012-13 ASCS, the submission date for councils' completed data returns was Friday 24 May 2013 and we published the provisional report just over six weeks after this, on Wednesday 10 July 2013. The final publication was in December 2013. For the SACE, the collection system was closed on Friday 01 March 2013, the provisional data were then published on Wednesday 05 June 2013 and the final data were published on Thursday 07 November 2013. The timescales will be similar for the 2013-14 ASCS.

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### 4. Data releases on the National Adult Social Care Intelligence Service (NASCIS)

As in previous years, we will use NASCIS to make council-level results available to councils on a restricted basis in June. The results will be provided through a spreadsheet. Access to the restricted data is strictly managed, and must be applied for each year via an authentication process. You need to sign up to our terms and conditions around how you

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and your colleagues can use the data. **It is necessary to sign up now even if you signed up last year.** For more information about how can sign up, please see the March letter to councils, which is available at: <http://www.hscic.gov.uk/socialcarecollections2014>.

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## 5. Case studies

### Introduction

We hope that each issue of the Surveys Newsletter will include case studies, which are intended to share general information or examples of methods used by LAs to undertake the survey process.

We would value your input for further case studies. Is there something that you have identified that you think would be useful to share via the Surveys Newsletter? Let us know by emailing [usersurvey@hscic.gov.uk](mailto:usersurvey@hscic.gov.uk).

### ‘Preparing for the ASCS’

Louise Johnstone, Cumbria County Council and ADASS representative as well as being Local Authority Lead for SSUSG, told us:

*“As Local Authority Lead on SSUSG I’d like to say how much we welcome this newsletter. We hope that, along with our SSUSG Forum (<https://govx.socitm.net/spaces/ssusg/>), it will be the first point of call for the answers to frequently asked questions and encourage people to share experiences of managing the survey process on the ground.*

*The HSCIC Guidance is very comprehensive in terms of setting out the ground rules for the ASCS and SACE but as we are all having to work with increasingly reduced resources and as people change roles it is helpful to be able to access ‘hints and tips’ to save time and effort in terms of actually administering the surveys. Like using lookups or other formulas to use in Excel to save time when coding demographics for the survey return, or scanning responses as opposed to manual data entry and so on.*

*As a starter-for-ten, here is a link to the internal procedure and example action plan we use in Cumbria:*

*<http://www.cumbria.gov.uk/eLibrary/Content/Internet//327/946/41708101056.xls>”.*

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## 6. Adult Social Care Outcomes Toolkit (ASCOT) update

ASCOT is a set of instruments designed to measure an individual’s social care-related quality of life (SCRQoL). ASCOT was developed by researchers at the PSSRU, University of Kent.

There are a number of versions of ASCOT suitable for use in different care settings and for different user groups. Currently there is a self-reported self-completion (SCT4/SCT3), an interview version (INT4), and a version suitable for use in care homes (CH3) that uses a mixed-methods approach, including observation to capture the SCRQoL of residents.

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The self-completion version (SCT4) of ASCOT is currently used with permission from the University of Kent within the ASCS (questions 2 to 11). **If you are interested in using ASCOT for local studies, please contact the ASCOT team ([ascot@kent.ac.uk](mailto:ascot@kent.ac.uk)) to request permission.** There is also support provided for users on the website and run various events and training courses annually. Please visit the following website for more information: <http://www.pssru.ac.uk/ascot/>.

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## 7. Maximising the Value of Survey Data in Adult Social Care (MAX)

The MAX project is funded by the Department of Health via the Quality and Outcomes of Person-centred Care Policy Research Unit (QORU, <http://www.qoru.ac.uk/>). The aim of this project is to find practical ways to help local authorities (LAs) use the data from the ASCS and SACE to improve policy and practice locally.

Over the past year, the MAX team have been finding out (i) what challenges councils face when they try to use the survey data to improve policy and practice locally? and (ii) what the MAX team can do to help councils make more and/or better use of the survey data? They identified a number of challenges including lack of time and resources, difficulties engaging staff in the survey, and difficulties analysing the data for practice due to the breadth of the questions, and representativeness and sample size for some service and client groups. The team has also found that LAs focused mainly on benchmarking with other councils and the previous year's results.

Despite the challenges, LA staff welcome the surveys and see them as an important way of collecting carers' and users' views of their services. What staff wanted from the MAX team was help to analyse, interpret, and communicate the results in ways that would help them make more use of the data for informing and improving policy and practice locally and, importantly, save them time. They were also interested in hearing more about what other councils were doing to improve how they use the survey data.

Over the next two years, the MAX team will be developing a toolkit for each survey to help LAs analyse, interpret, and communicate the survey data; and putting together a knowledge sharing seminar series for LAs. To read blogs of their findings, or find how to get involved in the development of the toolkits, and participate in the knowledge sharing events, please visit the following website: <http://www.maxproject.org.uk/>.

The MAX team are Juliette Malley, Clara Heath, Kamilla Razik, Diane Fox and James Caiels from the PSSRU, University of Kent.

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## 8. Survey of Carers in Households, England Consultation Exercise

The HSCIC launched the Survey of Carers in Households, England consultation on 28 April 2014, it will run for 8 weeks and close on the 23 June 2014. This consultation aims to engage with the users of the survey to develop a more complete understanding of the use

made of this data and to ensure the survey continues to be relevant and meaningful to the needs of users. Comments will be considered against resource pressures, but will be invaluable to determine requirements for any new contractual arrangements for any future survey.

The HSCIC is unable to commit to this survey either being re-commissioned in the future nor, if it is re-commissioned, its timing, as it is subject to funding being made available from external sponsors.

We would like to invite users to respond to a questionnaire to help us make informed decisions on the future content and structure of the survey. We need to understand how the survey is used and what our users' priorities are – part of this is to understand what things you would not want to change about the survey but also discovering what innovation users would wish to see.

The questionnaire and full details of the consultation are available at:  
<http://www.hscic.gov.uk/article/4723/Survey-of-Carers-In-Households-England-2009-2010>.

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## 9. Reminder for councils

We'd like to use this opportunity to remind you that the submission deadline for your ASCS data return is 22 May 2014. This is also the date of local and European elections, so if you think this is likely to cause issues, please submit your ASCS data return before the deadline day.

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## 10. Recent queries and answers

In this section we present selected queries that have been sent to the HSCIC with the answer given, along with the subject matter of each query for easy navigation. More queries and answers can be found at: <http://www.hscic.gov.uk/article/3383/Adult-Social-Care-user-survey-guidance---2013-14>.



**Adding extra columns to the data return** We need to add some columns of data to the survey spreadsheet for the local questions we have asked, but when we type titles and data into the columns on the extreme right hand side of the spreadsheet they do not display no matter what we do. Please can you advise us?

Please ensure that any data in additional columns for local questions are excluded from the data return that is sent to the HSCIC.



Cells on the 'Service\_User\_Data' worksheet of the data return beyond column CH are formatted with the custom cell format ';;;'. As this specifies an empty number format to Excel it prevents data stored in those cells from being displayed. To display data in these cells, change the format of these cells to something meaningful, for example 'General' or one of the standard number formats.



**Service users in the sample who are known to have died** I would be grateful if you could clarify whether service users who are known to have died since they were sent a survey (and did not respond) should be removed from the sample or should they be included in the data collection as a non-respondent?

Service users who are known to have died since they were sent a survey (and did not respond) should be removed from the sample. This is specified in Section 18.9 of the guidance ([http://www.hscic.gov.uk/media/12800/Adult-Social-Care-Survey-Guidance-2013-14-v10/pdf/Adult\\_Social\\_Care\\_Survey\\_Guidance\\_2013-14\\_v1.0.pdf](http://www.hscic.gov.uk/media/12800/Adult-Social-Care-Survey-Guidance-2013-14-v10/pdf/Adult_Social_Care_Survey_Guidance_2013-14_v1.0.pdf)):



*“The process of selecting a sample is likely to take some time. One consequence of this could be that some service users who were eligible at the start of the selection procedure would be ineligible by the end of the survey. An example of the former might be users who have been taken into hospital or died. These people should not be counted as having a form sent to them and should be removed from the original sample of users.”*

I also refer you to Section 19.1 of the guidance:

*“The majority of people who are removed from the sample are likely to be those who lack the capacity to consent to take part. As these service users are more likely to have LD or mental health needs, then these subgroups will be underrepresented in your final sample. Therefore, it is **vital** that those service users who are removed are replaced with another service user from the same age group, primary client type and care setting. This also applies to those removed for other reasons such as those who have recently died.”*



**Finance data** Please can you clarify something for me regarding the ‘complete cost of care package’.

Is this calculating the cost of the services open on the survey snapshot date, or should any other closed services these current clients have received during 2013/14?

For example, if Client A is currently in receipt of homecare (at time of survey) and but day care that ended a month before the survey date, does the day care need to be included in the financial calculations? Or is the financial data simply based on services open on the day of the survey?

The costs reported should reflect the whole planned care package i.e. the planned annual budget allocated to a person for their care and support. Details, including what to include and exclude, can be found in the guidance document ([http://www.hscic.gov.uk/media/12800/Adult-Social-Care-Survey-Guidance-2013-14-v10/pdf/Adult\\_Social\\_Care\\_Survey\\_Guidance\\_2013-14\\_v1.0.pdf](http://www.hscic.gov.uk/media/12800/Adult-Social-Care-Survey-Guidance-2013-14-v10/pdf/Adult_Social_Care_Survey_Guidance_2013-14_v1.0.pdf), p.47-48). I believe that page 71 (Appendix H) of the guidance will also help with your question.

