**Ebulletin: Community Mental Health Survey 2016**

CQC are looking at how response rates can be improved as this will greatly benefit all users of the survey results, and means that you can have more confidence in your data which will help you to identify local areas for improvement.

We’ve given some suggestions below for **publicising** the survey, and ask for any **feedback or suggestions** you may have that we can share across all other trusts.

**Why Publicise the Survey?**

The response rate for the community mental health survey varies greatly across trusts, and is lower on average than other surveys in the national patient survey programme.

One action that is worth taking to improve this is to publicise the survey to service users that are likely to be selected for the survey, to encourage them to respond if they receive a questionnaire.

This can be done both before the survey starts, and during fieldwork (when questionnaires are being sent out and returned).

We are aware that there may be particular challenges with publicising the survey to potential respondents, as people using community mental health services may be seen in a number of different settings, including their own home.

We also appreciate that some trusts are very active in promoting the survey, and the intention is to bring all trusts in line, so that the publicity work is consistent and wide-reaching across all trusts.

Please consider what can be done in your area, and talk to your trust’s communications department and / or press office as they may be able to help you with other ways in which you can promote the survey locally.

**Encouraging service users directly**

Publicising the survey will help raise awareness of the survey to potential respondents, and will also enable people to opt out of taking part. However, it is important to consider the impact of publicity, to ensure that you aren’t encouraging some groups to respond over others – as this would lead to an unbalanced view of service user experience.

People will be more likely to take part in a survey if they understand the purpose of it, and that their feedback is used and valued. This also address the ‘fairness’ requirement of the [first principle of the Data Protection Act,](https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/principle-1-fair-and-lawful/) by providing information to people about the purposes of the survey and how data from this will be used.

CQC will be undertaking its own promotion of the survey from a central viewpoint, and strongly encourages trusts to run their own publicity, from your local perspective.

To encourage people to respond to the survey, we recommend you illustrate how the trust has acted on the results of the previous Community Mental Health Surveys carried out by the trust, such as by highlighting improvements you have made based on the survey results. People are likely to be more motivated to take part in the survey if they can see tangible outcomes from a previous survey, and if they feel that their contribution is valued.

You could use a variety of methods:

**Posters**

These will let people know that you will be carrying out a survey and that they may be selected to take part. A [poster](http://www.nhssurveys.org/survey/1668) is available on the NHS Surveys website and you can add a telephone number in here for people to opt out of the survey if they wish.

**Local media**

Send a press release to the local media (such as newspapers and radio) to raise awareness of the survey and gain publicity just before the survey takes place. Information to help you draft a press release is available in the [instruction manual](http://www.nhssurveys.org/surveys/891).

**User Groups, Forums, Volunteers and other Community groups**

Involve any user groups or connections you have within your trust to ask them to encourage people to respond. They may also have views and suggestions on the results when available.

**Newsletter**

If you produce a trust newsletter for people using services, you could include a feature on the survey in this.

**Trust website**

You could include information about the survey on the website for your trust, and perhaps have a banner on the front page of the trust website.

**Social Media**

Consider using social media such as Twitter or Facebook, YouTube, blogs and on-line forums for example, or other local social media to publicise the survey. You could involve people who use services in these.

**Informing staff within your trust**

If staff are kept informed about, and engaged with the survey, it will help the

survey run more smoothly. Well briefed staff will be more confident promoting the benefits of the survey and will be able to answer any questions they may be asked by service users.

Staff could be notified of the survey through a variety of methods:

**Regular communications**

Such as emails to all staff, staff briefings, newsletters and any other existing channels where the survey could be mentioned.

**Specific survey promotion**

Such as a notice on the trust website and intranet, survey flyers and posters, or specific emails or briefings. The [instruction manual](http://www.nhssurveys.org/surveys/891) for the survey includes templates that you may like to use or modify. These could be placed on noticeboards, made available in staff rooms or placed in other areas where they would be viewed by staff.

**Face-to-face**

Such as meetings, presentations, seminars and events. For example, you could hold an event at lunch time, for staff to come along and hear about the survey and ask any questions.

**Feedback**

Given the community based nature of contact with service users we are aware that different services may require different or novel approaches.

CQC will greatly appreciate any feedback and suggestions that you have on publicising the survey - such as methods that you use locally, suggestions for improving publicity, or the guidance offered to trusts.

Please send your feedback to: patient.survey@cqc.org.uk