

31 January 2003

Finsbury Tower
103-105 Bunhill Row
London EC1Y 8TG
Telephone: 020 7448 9200
Fax: 020 7448 9222
Text phone: 020 7448 9292
www.chi.nhs.uk

Dear colleague,

National patient survey programme: survey of PCT patients

Obtaining feedback from patients and taking account of their views and priorities is vital for bringing about improvements in the quality of care, and placing the patient at the centre of health services.

As you may know, the Commission for Health Improvement (CHI) is taking over the national patient survey programme. This year the survey programme will include surveys in acute trusts, PCTs and mental health trusts.

At the beginning of December I emailed you with information about the forthcoming PCT survey, and earlier this month summarised the feedback we received from PCTs.

I am now writing to update you on progress with the survey, and to ask you for a contact within your organisation who will be leading on the survey.

Process for conducting the survey

The process for conducting the survey is as follows:

- a standard questionnaire is being developed;
- the NHS Surveys Advice Centre is developing guidance to be followed to support PCTs and ensure that surveys are undertaken in a consistent way;
- the NHSIA has developed new software for PCTs to obtain a sample of patients from their NHAIS (Exeter) system: NHAIS system managers will be provided with information about this directly by the NHSIA;
- PCTs are responsible for ensuring that the surveys are undertaken, either in-house, or through one of a list of approved contractors (without further tendering for the survey work);
- results will be collated by the NHS Surveys Advice Centre, and will be used for the 2003 performance indicators and ratings, and to provide benchmarks for PCT results.

The outline of the methodology for the surveys which was circulated to PCTs in December is available on the NHS Surveys Advice Centre website:
www.nhssurveys.org.

Timetable and guidance

The detailed guidance for the surveys will be available on the NHSsurveys.org website in the week commencing 10 February 2003.

Please could you advise the NHS Surveys Advice Centre of contact details for the lead person with responsibility for the survey in your PCT, by 7th February 2003. The advice centre can be contacted on: 01865 208 127, email: primarycare.data@pickereurope.ac.uk .

Forthcoming deadlines will be:

- by 21st February 2003: PCTs inform NHS advice centre who will be undertaking the survey;
- 9 May 2003: deadline for results to be provided to NHS Surveys Advice Centre.

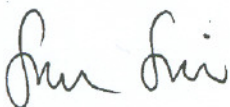
Performance indicators based on these surveys will be published in July 2003 ratings. The publication of national benchmarks is planned for the summer, followed by a national report.

Summary

This year there will be surveys in PCTs, with results being used for the 2003 performance ratings. PCTs are responsible for ensuring the surveys are undertaken. Full guidance will be available on the NHS Surveys Advice Centre website (www.nhssurveys.org) during the week commencing 10 February. In the meantime you need to identify the lead for this work in your trust, and inform the NHS Surveys Advice Centre by the 7th February.

For further information please contact the NHS Surveys Advice Centre via the website or on 01865 208127.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sarah Scobie', written in a cursive style.

Sarah Scobie
Assistant Director, Office for Information on Health Care Performance