

To: SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE		Subject: SOCIAL WORK SERVICE USER SURVEY	
From: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK			
Date: 24 AUGUST 2006	Ref: Res/P&I/MMcK		

**1. Purpose of Report / Introduction**

The purpose of this report is to advise the Committee of the results of a Service User Survey of current and recent service users and carers. A full copy of the survey report is available in the Members' Library.

**2. Background**

- 2.1. As part of the Departmental approach to Communications, Best Value and Continuous Improvement, a survey of service users and carers was commissioned in 2005 and completed in June, 2006.
- 2.2. A social work consultation model, based on a questionnaire format, tried and tested in England and Wales, was adopted. Minor modifications were made to the questionnaire in order to facilitate feedback and maximise the range of information gathered from the respondents. The survey covered generic customer care issues such as:
  - Quality and Accessibility of information
  - Levels of courtesy and sensitivity shown by staff
  - Waiting times and conditions.
- 2.3. Following a competitive selection process, the research group DTZ Pida were contracted to assist in the conduct of the survey and analysis of the results.

**3. Proposals / Considerations**

- 3.1. A sample of just over 1,000 current and recent service users and carers were contacted with the survey questionnaire both in writing and in face-to-face focus groups. Feedback was also obtained by telephone. The sample was stratified to give a proportionate geographical spread of population as well as to ensure that all care groups and categories were covered.
- 3.2. 421 responses were obtained, a 40%+ response rate which is extremely high for such exercises.
- 3.3. Among other findings the analysis can be summarised as follows:
  - 3.1.1 **Finding out about Social Work**  
 Before receiving social work services, 23% of respondents had already seen information about the sort of services that could be provided by social work. Those who had received information before they started getting services were asked if the information they received explained how to get in touch with social work. More than half (58%) said that it did.

### 3.1.2 Making Contact with Social Work

Many of those receiving help from social work services had initially been referred by the hospital (34%), although a significant proportion had asked for help themselves (21%) or had a family member ask on their behalf (20%). 42% of people were seen or spoken to about the services they might need within a week.

### 3.1.3 Assessing your Needs

The majority of respondents (75%) said that they felt that they had been asked at an early stage what services they thought they needed. Of those responding to this question in different service user groups, the results are broadly in the same range with 75% of those in the Community Care, Older People group saying that they were asked what they thought they needed, rising to 83% in the Community Care, Adults and Children and Families/Childcare group, with other groups somewhere in this range.

Respondents were asked whether social work staff took note of important matters relating to their race, culture or religion. Around a third of respondents said that this did not apply to them, but of those to whom this did apply only 25% said that this had been taken note of.

### 3.1.4 Arranging and Receiving Help and Services

Once a decision was made to provide services, most respondents (79%) felt that these were put in place quickly. Whilst 86% of service users responding to this question said that they felt they got help quickly, only 60% of carers said that they felt this was the case.

This table shows the responses to the question "Since receiving help, have you been asked how things are working out or whether you would like anything changed?"

	Yes	No	Don't know
Community Care, Adult	58%	40%	1%
Community Care, Older People (65+)	40%	57%	3%
Criminal Justice	67%	33%	0%
Children and Families/ Childcare	67%	33%	0%
Carers	53%	45%	2%

Note: this table excludes non-responses.

Most (64%) of those who had asked for changes to be made said that these had been carried out to their satisfaction. This falls to 56% among Criminal Justice service users and rises to 68% among carers.

### 3.1.5 Complaints

Less than a third of respondents (29%) said that they had been told how to complain about the services they receive. This is lowest among Community Care, Older People service users (25%) and highest among Criminal Justice service users (67%), indicating significant variation across service user groups. Just under half (48%) of those who have made a complaint about the services they receive from social work said that the complaints process was easy to understand and easy to use.

### 3.1.6 Summary

Overall, 89% of service users and carers surveyed were satisfied with the service they receive from social work, rating it as fair (18%), good (41%) or excellent (30%). Only 8% considered the service they had received to be either poor or very poor. Direct service users are more satisfied overall with the services received, with 96% of those responding to the service user survey rating them as either fair, good or excellent. This drops to 76% in the carers' survey.

A full breakdown of responses by service user group is shown in this table:

	Satisfied (excellent/good/fair)	Not satisfied (poor/very poor)
Community Care, Adult	93%	7%
Community Care, Older People (65+)	97%	3%
Criminal Justice	93%	7%
Children and Families/Childcare	83%	17%
Carers	75%	25%

Note: this table excludes non-responses.

### 3.4. Issues to be addressed for future action include:

- communication with users and carers at various stages of the care process
- the need to highlight ways to complain
- ongoing assessment of requirements.

## 4. Financial / Personnel / Legal / Policy Implication

- 4.1. The fee for the services of the professional researchers was £10,000
- 4.2. There are no Personnel or Legal Implications of this report
- 4.3. Certain findings of the survey will inform areas of future policy and an action plan will be formulated based on the key conclusions.

## 5. Recommendation

- 5.1. The Committee is asked to approve this report and note the survey report.



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26<sup>th</sup> June, 2006

For further information on this report please contact Ronnie Paul on telephone 01698 332009.