

Carrying out a local survey: avoiding duplication

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Before you carry out an additional patient survey in your trust, please check that the same or a similar survey is not already planned as part of the Care Quality Commission's national patient survey programme. If there is a national survey scheduled for around the same time, it is very important that appropriate steps are taken to avoid duplication.

To do this, you should consider:

- **How will patients or service users be selected for the surveys?** It is of particular importance that no patients are included in the samples for both surveys as people will be understandably reluctant to fill in multiple surveys received around the same time and this may negatively impact upon the response rates to both surveys. Carefully check the sampling instructions for any related national surveys when planning local surveys, and, if possible, cross check lists of sample members to ensure that there is no duplication. Also, remember that many patients will access more than one service in their care pathway. For example, many inpatients will have attended an emergency department before being admitted; sending these patients questionnaires about both experiences must be avoided.
- **When will fieldwork for the surveys be taking place?** Ideally, there should normally be no overlap in the fieldwork periods (that is, the time when questionnaires are being sent to sample members) of the two surveys. There may be some exceptions to this – for example where a parallel sample is being used and the desire is to compare results from that cohort to those from the national survey – but generally it will be advisable to separate different surveys.

Adult inpatients survey

If you are planning to undertake an additional 'adult inpatient survey' it is especially important to consider any potential impact this might have on your national inpatient survey. You might want to consider the following:

- **When you want to carry out your first inpatient survey** – it would not be advisable to run a local adult inpatient survey at the same time as the national adult inpatient survey unless you are able to ensure you are sampling two distinct and separate groups of patients. If you decide to carry out two inpatient surveys at the same time, you will need to think about when you are going to draw your sample for each and if you have sufficient patient numbers. Further advice on this will be available in section '10.13' (Making more use of the survey locally') of the guidance for the national survey and also in the separate 'Guide to conducting a local inpatient survey'.
- **The frequency with which you want to run your own adult inpatient surveys** – The maximum number of adult inpatient surveys you could feasibly run in one year would be four (every quarter). However, consider how long this will give you to work with the results to effect improvements between survey cycles: if surveys are conducted on a quarterly basis there will be extremely little time between one survey being completed and the next being started. Alternatively, you may decide running an inpatient survey every six months will allow you to make full use of the data from each cycle.