

Tell me more.....about surveys of my local hospital

What are the surveys for?

All NHS trusts in England are legally required to carry out local surveys asking patients their views of their recent healthcare experiences. One main purpose of these surveys is to provide organisations with detailed patient feedback on standards of service and care in order to help set priorities for delivering a better service for patients. By finding out what previous patients thought of their care organisations can make improvements for the patients of the future.

What do the surveys find out about?

Patients are asked specific factual questions about what happened to them during their recent healthcare experience. They can ask about such things as admission to hospital, the condition of the ward, the doctors and nurses and the operations and procedures. These 'reporting' style questions highlight where any problems are and what needs to be done to address them.

What happens to the results?

Each trust or healthcare organisation is sent a report which gives details of the results of their survey. These results are also made available to the public by the Care Quality Commission and can be viewed on their website (see below for further information).

The Care Quality Commission also writes a separate report that describes the national picture and what patients across the country are saying about the standard of service throughout the NHS.

Who sees these results?

As well as the Care Quality Commission, the results are seen by the governing board and the senior managers of the trust. The trust is also encouraged to share the results with its staff and with the local community that use its services. This can be done in a range of ways, including publishing the results on the trust's website, announcing the findings to the local media and in any trust newsletters. The main findings should also be reported in *Your Guide to Local Health Services*, a document that primary care trusts are required to distribute to all local households.

How are the results acted upon?

Your local trust should analyse the results to find out where they can make improvements. They can compare the findings with previous years' survey findings or with the findings of other trusts around the country that are similar to them.

They then need to decide the main priorities and draw up an action plan of what needs to happen to introduce the changes. Ideally one person from the organisation takes the lead in making sure these changes take place.

Who carries out these improvements?

Depending on what changes are needed, a range of staff can get involved in introducing improvements. The trust is also encouraged to invite patients and representatives from the local community to help in this process to ensure that their views continue to be included. For instance if a trust is not providing a patient with enough information before they have an outpatients appointment, then staff from the X-ray, pathology and pharmacy departments, who are likely to see the patient, could be involved in finding a solution to the problem.

How can I find out about results of surveys in my local area?

The results of surveys carried out by your local trust can be found by visiting the Care Quality Commission's website at www.cqc.org.uk. If you go to the 'Find care services' section and then select 'Healthcare' followed by 'Overall performance', you will be able to select your chosen trust or geographical location. From there you can obtain an overview of how well the trust is rated overall, as well as the survey results themselves in the 'how patients rate this trust' section.

Who should I contact for more information?

Each trust has a Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) representative who can tell you more about your local survey findings and what action is being taken to bring about improvements. You can obtain their details by visiting the trust's website or ringing the trust directly.