

## Survey of users of services 2006

### Community mental health services

This survey aimed to find out about the experiences of people using mental health services in the community. These services provide care to people who have been referred to a psychiatric outpatient clinic or local community mental health team.

Surveys are an important way of gathering information about the experiences of patients and listening to their views. The results are used by NHS trusts to help them set priorities to ensure they are delivering a better service for patients. They are also used as part of the Healthcare Commission's annual health check to help measure the quality of care being provided to patients. Results are also used to assess performance against the Department of Health's targets on patient experience. Measuring and reporting experiences in a structured way helps ensure that improving experiences remains a priority for NHS trusts.

This survey involved 79 NHS trusts, which provide secondary mental health services, including combined mental health and social care trusts, and primary care trusts that provide mental health services. Each trust selected a random sample of 850 adults, (aged 16 years and over) who were registered on the care programme approach and had used community mental health services between September 1<sup>st</sup> 2005 and November 30<sup>th</sup> 2005. The care programme approach is the process used by providers of mental health services to coordinate the care for people who have mental health problems.

All the trusts involved in the survey have received detailed reports containing the results of their own survey benchmarked against national results. These reports are available, along with tables containing the percentage results for each question, and the results from previous surveys on the Healthcare Commission's website: <http://www.healthcarecommission.org.uk/NationalPatientSurveyProgramme>. Here we highlight some of the key findings from the 2006 survey and describe how the experiences of patients has changed over time.

Where appropriate, comparisons are made with results from the 2004 and 2005 surveys. The 2004 and 2005 surveys covered adults of working age (16-65), whereas the 2006 survey extended the age range to include those aged over 65. In order to allow fair comparison with previous years, this briefing note is based on those aged up to 65 only. In 2006, 19,494 self-completion questionnaires were returned from respondents aged 16-65, an overall response rate of 39%. This compares with 41% in 2005 and 42% in 2004. Although the differences reported in this briefing note are small, as the size of the sample is so large, any changes from previous surveys are almost certain to be real (and not a result of chance or the way the survey was conducted).

The survey covered a range of issues identified by users of services as important to them. This note summarises findings on: the care programme approach, relationships with healthcare professionals, medication, counselling, crisis management and support in the community.

### **The care programme approach**

The care programme approach was adopted in 1991 and provides a structure for mental health care. All users of services should be given a written copy of their care plan, which identifies their needs and explains their care. The care programme approach is classified into 'standard' and 'enhanced'. The latter is aimed at those with more acute mental health problems. The percentages of people allocated to each type varies widely from trust to trust. Since the needs, and experiences, of the two groups may differ, some of the subsequent results are presented separately for each.

Just over half (53%) of all respondents said they had been given or offered a copy of their care plan. This is an increase from 49% in 2004 and 50% in 2005. Forty five per cent of those on the standard care programme approach had been given (or offered) a copy of their care plan (compared with 41% in 2005). This figure was much higher among those on the enhanced care programme approach (70% in 2005 and 71% in 2006).

Respondents who had been given or offered a copy of their care plan were asked about their understanding of, and involvement in, their care plan. The percentage of people who said that they definitely understood what was in their plan has increased from 47% in 2004, to 58% in 2005 and 2006. Of those who wanted to be involved in drawing up their plan 40% said that they definitely had been (a decrease from 42% in 2005), while 35% said that they had been involved to some extent and 25% said that they had not been involved.

A care review is a forum for users of services to meet with healthcare professionals to discuss their care plan. The percentage of people who had at least one care review in the last 12 months increased from 47% in 2005 to 51% in 2006.

Respondents on the enhanced care programme approach were more likely to report that they had a care review (71%) than those on the standard care programme approach (41%).

Almost three quarters (73%) said that they were given the chance to speak with their care coordinator before the care review meeting (compared with 74% in 2005). A similar percentage (72%) of those who wanted to invite a friend or relative to the meeting were told that they could do so (an increase from 70% in 2005). The percentage that felt that they were definitely given the chance to express their views at the meeting increased from 66% in 2005 to 68% in 2006. There was also an increase in the percentage of people who said that they definitely found the meeting helpful (up from 47% in 2005 to 49% in 2006).

## Relationships with healthcare professionals

### Care coordinator

A care coordinator is the person responsible for managing the care that people receive from different sources, and for liaising with the users of services and other healthcare professionals. The percentage of respondents who were told who their care coordinator was has increased each year from 67% in 2004 to 69% in 2005 and 70% in 2006. As in previous years, those on the enhanced care programme approach were more likely to know who their care coordinator was (86%) than those on the standard care programme approach (62%). Among those respondents who knew who their care coordinator was, 71% said that they could always contact them if they had a problem, and 25% said that they could sometimes contact them if they had a problem.

### Psychiatrists

The majority of respondents (84%) had seen a psychiatrist in the last 12 months. Of these, 75% had seen the same psychiatrist on their previous two appointments (no change from 2005 but an improvement from 73% in 2004). Sixty one per cent of respondents said that they definitely had trust and confidence in their psychiatrist (compared with 59% in 2005). Those who had seen the same psychiatrist for their previous two appointments (66%) were more likely than those who had seen two different psychiatrists (47%) to say that they definitely had trust and confidence in the psychiatrist. This is a slight improvement on 2005 where 64% of respondents who had seen the same psychiatrist for their previous two appointments definitely had trust and confidence in the psychiatrist. The percentage of people who felt that they had definitely been treated with respect and dignity by their psychiatrist has increased slightly each year, from 79% in 2004, to 80% in 2005 and 81% in 2006. Similarly, the proportion of people who felt that the psychiatrist had definitely listened carefully to them increased from 68% in 2004, to 69% in 2005, and 70% in 2006. Sixty four per cent of respondents reported that they were definitely given enough time to discuss their condition or treatment, compared with 60% in 2004 and 63% in 2005.

### Community psychiatric nurses

A community psychiatric nurse (or community mental health nurse) is a nurse with specialist training in mental health who works in the community. Their role includes providing support and supervising medication. Almost three fifths (57%) of respondents had seen a community psychiatric nurse in the last 12 months. Of these, 80% felt that the community psychiatric nurse had definitely listened carefully to them. There was a slight increase between 2005 and 2006 in the percentage that definitely had trust and confidence in their community psychiatric nurse (from 73% to 74%), and the percentage reporting that they were definitely treated with respect and dignity (from 85% to 86%).

### Other healthcare professionals

Over half (56%) of respondents had seen a healthcare professional other than a psychiatrist or community psychiatric nurse. Other professionals were categorised as social workers (seen by 29%), occupational therapists (seen by 17%), psychologists (seen by 23%), and 'someone else' (30% of responses to this question). Of these, a

higher percentage reported that they had definitely been treated with respect and dignity in the 2006 survey (86%) compared with 84% in 2005 and 83% in 2004. The percentage reporting that they had definitely been carefully listened to was the same in 2006 and 2005 (79%), having increased from 77% in 2004.

### **Medication**

As in 2004 and 2005, the majority of respondents (93%) had taken medication for their mental health problems in the last 12 months. Of these, the percentage who felt that they had definitely been involved in decisions about this medication has increased, from 39% in 2005 to 42% in 2006. Forty per cent of respondents felt that they were only involved to some extent, and 17% said that they were not involved at all.

Respondents who had been prescribed any new medications in the last 12 months (45% of total) were asked if they were told about the purposes and possible side effects. Sixty three per cent reported that they were definitely told about the purposes of their new medication, and 27% said that they had been told to some extent. There has been a gradual improvement in the percentage of respondents reporting that they were definitely told about the purposes of their new medication rising from 60% in 2004 and 62% in 2005. Thirty eight per cent said that they were definitely told about possible side effects of their new medication, 28% said that they had been told to some extent, with 34% reporting they were not told. Again, there has been a gradual increase in the percentage of respondents reporting that they were definitely told about the possible side effects of their new medication rising from 36% in 2004 and 37% in 2005.

### **Counselling**

There has been a slight decrease in the percentage of respondents reporting that they had received counselling sessions (such as talking therapy) from NHS mental health services in the last 12 months falling from 42% in 2004 to 40% in 2005 and 39% in 2006. The percentage saying they wanted talking therapy is the same as in 2005 (57%) though a slight decrease compared with 2004 (59%). Of those respondents who had not received counselling sessions, over a third (35%) said they would have liked them.

More than half (52%) of respondents who had received counselling (such as talking therapy) said that they had definitely found it helpful (the same figure as in 2005).

### **Crisis management**

Just under half (49%) of respondents said that they had the number of someone from their local NHS mental health services whom they could contact out-of-hours compared with 48% in 2005. Of those who had a contact number, over a third (39%) had called it in the last 12 months. Sixty two per cent of these said that they had spoken to someone immediately (a decrease from 64% in 2005), while 21% got through in an hour or less (down slightly from 22% in 2005). Eight per cent said that they could not get through to anyone.

Respondents who had used this service were asked whether they had received the help they wanted. Under half (44%) said that they had definitely received the help they wanted – a decrease from the 2005 figure (48%).

### **Support in the community**

A fifth of respondents (20%) had visited a day centre in the last 2 months. Of these respondents, 58% reported going once or twice a week, 24% once or twice a month and 18% visited on most days. Fifty six per cent felt that the activities provided by the day centre were definitely helpful, an increase of three percentage points compared with 2004 (53%)

Less than half (48%) of those who had wanted information about local support groups had received it. Responses to this question are not directly comparable with the 2005 survey findings because of a change in question wording.

Around a fifth of respondents (21%) were in paid work at the time of filling in the questionnaire. Half (50%) of those who would have liked help in finding work (from mental health services) said they had not received any help. Sixty eight per cent of those who wanted help getting benefits had received it. Responses to this question are not directly comparable with the 2005 survey findings because of a change in question wording.

### **Overall views of care**

Overall, a quarter (26%) of respondents described the care they had received from mental health services in the last 12 months as excellent. Twenty eight per cent rated it as very good, and 23% as good. In total 77% of respondents reported their care as at least good, the same figure as in 2005. Five per cent rated their care as poor, and a further 4% as very poor (again, the same figures as in 2005). The rest (14%) said their care was fair.

### **Further Information**

For the detailed results of all 79 NHS trusts that took part in the survey, please visit <http://www.healthcarecommission.org.uk/NationalPatientSurveyProgramme>

A comprehensive report using the detailed results of this survey will be published later.

Information about the Department of Health's public service agreement target on patient experience may be found on the Department of Health website: <http://www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/PublishedSurvey/NationalSurveyOfNHSPatients/fs/en>