

Children and Young People's Services Service User Satisfaction Survey 2007/08

Overview

1. Objectives

The overall aim of the surveys is to ascertain satisfaction with services delivered by Social Services.

In addition, the bi-annual survey creates the opportunity to incorporate other recent/current/planned consultation within individual service areas.

The outcomes should also be able to inform us on:

- Identification of areas of good practice
- Identification of areas for improvement and development
- Improvements to future consultation and engagement methods for hard to reach people

2. Methodology

Each service area was explored separately to identify individual issues.

Meetings with team managers were held to agree the samples, timing, methods and question areas, and a diary and work plan were compiled.

A combination of questions, interviews and focus groups were used to consult, where appropriate.

Samples were created from Swift records, in consultation with Team Managers, and team members contributed to the identification of those inappropriate to contact at the time and any potential issues for responses.

Issue records (logs) were introduced to identify areas of improvement and good practice on which to base future consultation.

A range of qualitative and quantitative methods were used to ensure a range of high quality information was gathered. A number of new approaches were employed, building on the previous survey:

- Methods were considered to accommodate each of the client groups and individual service users' needs. Questionnaires included the use of symbols and large print where appropriate.
- A computer game based questionnaire was used for Looked After Children
- Questionnaires were provided for unpaid carers/relatives to encourage them to provide their own views if necessary
- Focus groups were held for those willing and able to contribute
- Structured interviews were carried out with service users who were willing to give their individual views via an informal visit

3. Response Rates

- Total contacted - 555 service users
- Total responded – 187 service users
- Percentage response – 34%

4. Key Findings–

Individual reports have been compiled on each service area and distributed to Team Managers. Copies are available from the Policy and Consultation Officer and will be published on the Staffnet shortly.

Based on the aggregated findings, from both children and their families within all service areas, the following generic issues have been identified. They may be grouped into four areas:

4.1 Information

- ⊗ More information about teams and staff should be provided before starting the service (inc. photographs).
- ⊗ More written information is required at the start of the service particularly in leaflet format (e.g. range of provision and how we can help the service user and their family).
- ⊗ Not all service users received information in a suitable and appropriate format for their needs (e.g. large print/Braille).
- ☺ Verbal information was well-received
- ☺ Service users appreciated information that is consistent and is available in a variety of formats throughout the service.

4.2 Initial contact, referral and assessment

- ⊗ Some service users had irregular contact from teams and key workers.
- ⊗ Waiting times for initial contact and follow up appointments were sometimes an issue.
- ⊗ Some children felt their assessment didn't capture all their needs
- ⊗ Some service users didn't feel involved in their assessments.
- ☺ Most service users were satisfied with the waiting times for contact and the initial meeting with a key worker
- ☺ Most children are satisfied that their social worker explains their role to them
- ☺ There are high levels of satisfaction with the knowledge and advice provided by key workers and specialist workers (where applicable).
- ☺ Service users and families felt that their circumstances are being taken into consideration by key/specialist workers during assessment.

4.3 Services Received

- ⊗ There is some dissatisfaction with both the explanation about, and the frequency of, reviews of care.
- ⊗ Some children reported that they had had a few different social workers over a period of time, and that they got used to one particular worker before they changed.
- ⊗ Some felt there was limited provision of some of the activities service users would like
- ☺ Care plans are developed on a regular basis and involve the service user and their families

- ☺ Most respondents were satisfied with the length of time they waited before starting a service, and with the actual service they received.
- ☺ Very positive comments were received about the attitude and knowledge of the staff in all areas
- ☺ Services are relieving worries and reducing stress for service users' families

4.4 Your Views

- ☹ Some limited knowledge of the complaints process was evidenced
- ☹ Some complaints made were not felt to be dealt with adequately
- ☺ Social Workers were often understanding without being judgemental, offering a balanced view of the situation and offering support with a range of issues.
- ☺ Teams have displayed professionalism and been understanding and supportive in all areas.
- ☺ Most foster carers felt that they and the child they look after had a positive experience with the social work teams

5. Conclusions

Children's Services appear to be fulfilling its objective of assisting children and their families in the community at a time when they are most vulnerable. Useful information has been gained about how social work teams are carrying out referrals and assessments and how we deliver assessed services. Valid suggestions for improvement have been elicited from the exercise for both future consultation and service delivery. Voluntary and partner organisations have been actively involved in the consultation process, creating a basis for partnership in the future.

6. Recommendations –

6.1 Service Related

- Service User Satisfaction programme continues to provide a measure for improvement
- Findings and resulting 'Issues Logs' will provide a benchmark against which satisfaction will be measured in future. Therefore, issues logs must be completed by managers for all areas.
- Better promotion of the Council complaints procedure should be considered.
- Communication channels need improvement within and between teams and service users
- Information provision must continue to develop and improve both initially and throughout the period of service delivery.

6.2 Methodology

- Improvements to the question areas and methods used continue to be made to ensure consistency and reliability
- Continue to engage unpaid carers and young children where possible
- Methods for consulting directly with clients with a learning disability are further developed
- Efforts to improve the response rates to be aimed for in the future

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