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for health and social care

Personal Social Services Survey of Adult Carers in England - 2009-10

Executive Summary

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Author: The NHS Information Centre, Social Care

Responsible Statistician: Paul Niblett, Section Head Social Care Dissemination

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Executive Summary

This is the first national user experience survey of carers known to Councils with Adult Social Services Responsibilities (CASSRs). Carers' thoughts, opinions and feelings are sought on a number of topics that are thought to be integral to helping them achieve a balanced life alongside their caring role. The survey was aimed at carers identified by local authorities aged 18 and over who are caring for someone aged 18 and over.

On 10 June 2008¹, the then Government published a Carers' Strategy which set out an aim that by 2018:

- carers will be respected as expert care partners and will have access to the integrated and personalised services they need to support them in their caring role;
- carers will be able to have a life of their own alongside their caring role;
- carers will be supported so that they are not forced into financial hardship by their caring role;
- carers will be supported to stay mentally and physically well and treated with dignity

This survey along with other survey work acts as a benchmark for the strategy and a number of the questions analysed throughout the report address these aims.

A copy of the full report which includes a copy of the survey questionnaire can be found on the NHS Information Centre website at:

www.ic.nhs.uk/pubs/psscscarersurvey0910.

Headline findings 2009/10

The Carer

- Nearly half (49%) of carers who responded to the survey were aged 65 or over, 44 per cent were aged 45-64 and the remaining 7 per cent were aged 18-44.
- Almost two-thirds (66%) of carers who responded to the survey were female.
- 91 per cent of respondents where ethnicity was known came from the White ethnic background.
- 57% of carers spent 35 hours or more per week looking after or helping the person they were caring for, 49% spent 50 hours or more caring and 37% of carers spent 100 hours or more per week caring.
- Almost three quarters (73%) of carers said that the person they were caring for lived with them.
- 29 per cent were looking after a parent, 47 per cent were looking after a spouse or partner, 14 per cent were looking after their child, 2 per cent were looking after their parent-in-law, 5 per cent were looking after another relative and the remaining 2 per cent were looking after a non-relative, friend or neighbour.

¹ "Carers at the heart of 21st century families and communities: a caring system on your side, a life of your own" available from http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_085345

Experience of Support and Services

- 54 per cent of carers reported that they were either extremely or very satisfied with the support or services they and the person they cared for had received in the last 12 months from Social Services, a further 29 per cent said they were fairly satisfied, 9 per cent were neither satisfied or dissatisfied and the remaining 8 per cent were either extremely, very or fairly dissatisfied.
- 29 per cent of carers were using support or services to enable them to take a break lasting longer than 24 hours and 35 per cent took shorter breaks lasting less than 24 hours.
- For longer breaks, 16 per cent were not using them because they were not available, a further 6 per cent were not doing so because they did not feel the services available were suitable and the remaining 48 per cent were not doing so for other reasons.
- For shorter breaks 15 per cent were not using them because they were not available, a further 5 per cent were not doing so because they did not feel the services available were suitable and the remaining 46 per cent were not doing so for other reasons.
- 61 per cent of users who were accessing longer breaks lasting more than 24 hours were either very or extremely satisfied with the breaks. This compared to 65 per cent of carers accessing short breaks lasting up to 24 hours.
- Of respondents who had indicated they had used carer support and services, 72 per cent stated that they found the support or services either quite easy or very easy to access, 21 per cent found it quite difficult and the remaining 7 per cent found it very difficult.
- Half (50%) of carers felt they were always involved or consulted as much as they wanted to be in discussions about the support or services the person they were caring for was receiving. A further 28 per cent said this was usually the case, 15 per cent were sometimes involved but 6 per cent said they were never involved to a level they would have liked.

Quality of Life

- 36 per cent of carers who responded to the survey said the overall quality of their lives was either good, very good or could not be better, a further 47 per cent said their quality of life was alright and the remaining 17 per cent said it was either bad, very bad or so bad it could not be worse.
- 23 per cent of carers reported they were able to spend their time as they wanted doing the things they valued or enjoyed. 64 per cent felt they did some things they valued or enjoyed but not enough and the remaining 13 per cent said they don't do anything they value or enjoy with their time.

Health

- Almost half (49%) of respondents reported that their health in general was either good or very good, 42 per cent said it was fair and the remaining 9 per cent said it was either bad or very bad.
- 82 per cent of carers stated that they were either always or usually involved in discussions with health professionals about the treatment of the person they care for at NHS hospitals compared to 88 per cent at GP surgeries or health centres

- 85 per cent of carers either always or usually felt they were treated with respect as a carer by health professionals at NHS hospitals compared to 90 per cent at GP surgeries or health centres.

Employment and Finance

- Nearly half (47%) of carers were either retired or self employed. 12 per cent were in employment and felt supported by their employer but 4 per cent were in employment and did not feel supported. A further 17 per cent were not working because of their caring responsibilities, 6 per cent did not need support from their employer to combine work and caring, and the remaining 14 per cent were not in employment for other reasons.
- 8 per cent of carers said they had suffered a lot of financial difficulty because of their caring role, 33 per cent had suffered to some extent but 60 per cent said they had suffered no financial difficulties at all.

Information and Advice

- A quarter (25%) of respondents reported that they found it very easy to find the information and advice they needed about support, services and benefits from either voluntary organisations, private agencies or Social Services. Almost half (48%) stated they found it fairly easy to get this information, but 19 per cent found it fairly difficult and 7 per cent found it very difficult.
- The majority of carers who had received information and advice felt it had been helpful to them. 92 per cent said that they had found it either quite or very helpful but the remaining 8 per cent said they had found it either quite or very unhelpful.

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This publication may be requested in large print or other formats.

Comments

If you have any comments on this report they would be welcomed. Please complete the online feedback form which can be found at www.ic.nhs.uk/pubs/psscarsersurvey0910.

Any questions concerning any data in this publication, or requests for further information, should be addressed to:

Responsible Statistician

Paul Niblett, Section Head Social Care Dissemination

For further information:

www.ic.nhs.uk

0845 300 6016

enquiries@ic.nhs.uk

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