

Survey of Complaints – Yorkshire Ambulance Service

About the organisation

Yorkshire Ambulance Service (YAS) provides emergency ambulance response, patient transport, and 111 services throughout Yorkshire. In addition, it has a subcontracted GP out of hours services for the West Yorkshire area.

It covers almost 6,000 square miles of varied terrain, from isolated moors and dales to urban areas, coastline and inner cities. It employs over 5,000 staff and provides 24-hour emergency and healthcare services to a population of more than five million.

Methodology

YAS used the long version of both the pre- and post-outcome surveys. They amended the survey to remove some questions and to include additional information about YAS.

The survey was sent by post using additional administrative resource. YAS developed exclusion criteria and all exclusion decisions were considered by the patient relations manager rather than a complaints handler.

Pre-outcome surveys were sent 3 weeks after receipt of the complaint. This was reduced to 2 weeks as many complaints were closed before a survey was sent. The post-outcome survey was sent two weeks after the complaint was closed.

Responses were anonymous as this was felt to increase the likelihood of return, but complainants were given the option to provide their contact details should they wish to follow up any comments they had made.

What changed?

YAS did not previously use a survey. They received a 19% response rate to the pre-outcome survey and an 8% response to the post-outcome survey.

They are currently considering the results and deciding what changes they need to make. The initial information suggests they need to look at how they communicate at the start of the process so information in the acknowledgement letter is better recognised by complainants.

What challenges were there?

They felt the post-outcome survey response rate would have been greater had the pre-outcome survey not been sent. They also received some negative feedback from complainants regarding receiving a survey before their complaint was completed.

Useful learning for others

YAS recommend only sending surveys following completion of the complaint.