

Survey of local authorities after the NMDS-SC return in 2016

January 2017



For the past 6 years, all 152 Local Authorities in England have been advised by the NHS Digital that they are expected to complete a National Minimum Data Set for Social Care (NMDS-SC) return. In 2016 the time period for making a return was between 11th September and 13th October 2016. In 2016, for the 5th year in a row, all 152 Local Authorities in England have met the criteria of a full NMDS-SC return, which comprises of location/team information and 90% of all workers working within adult social care.

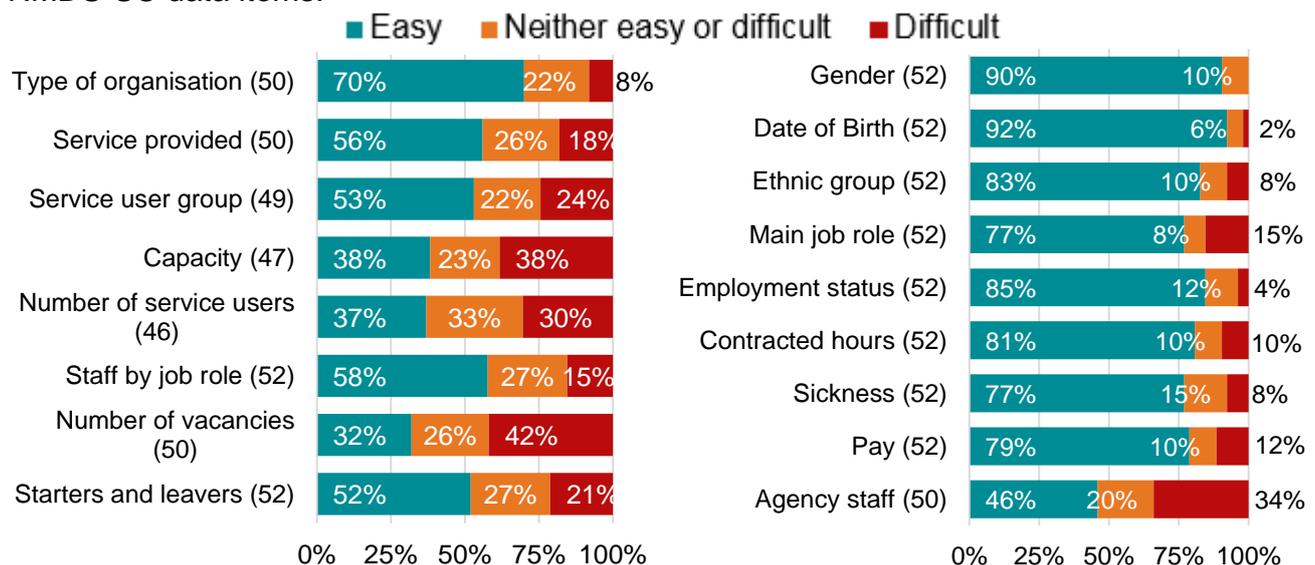
Skills for Care works closely with local authorities to support them to make their NMDS-SC return, providing support such as workshops, telephone and email support and guidance and resources on the NMDS-SC website. In order for Skills for Care to ensure that they are offering the most useful support possible, each year, shortly after the NMDS-SC return, a short voluntary survey is sent to local authorities asking about their experiences across a range of aspects of the return. In 2016, 52 local authorities responded to this post-return survey and the results are discussed below.

Planning

- When asked if the LA used the process flow charts provided by Skills for Care to help with their planning 56% said yes they did, and 44% said no they didn't. Of those that used the flow charts 34% found them very useful, 62% quite useful and 3% not very useful.
- In response to the question 'Could Skills for Care have done anything better at this stage' 77% said no, 15% said they did not know and only 8% said yes.
- Over half of the responding local authorities (60%) said that they could not have planned any more effectively, while 40% said they could.
- Lessons learnt from this years that will help with planning for 2017 included; 'a good handover and training for new staff', 'allocate more time to the return', 'gather data and prepare early' and 'regular updated throughout the year'

The upload

The charts below show how easy or difficult Local Authorities found it to complete selected NMDS-SC data items.

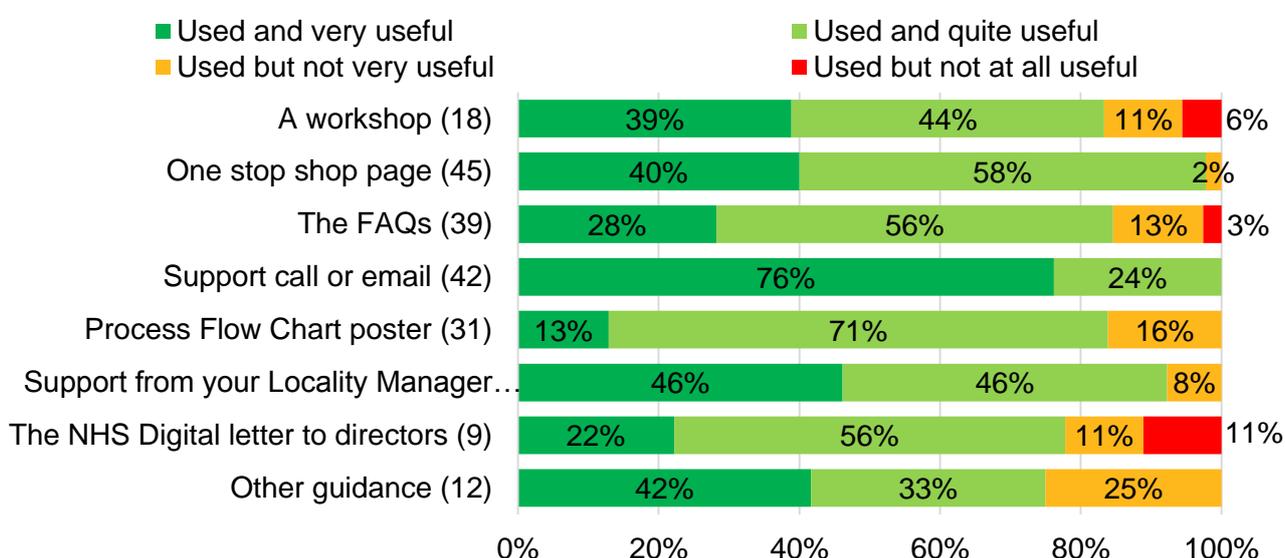


In 2016 27% of authorities said they found providing qualification information easy, an improvement from 19% in 2015. A further 19% said it was neither easy nor difficult, 31% that it was quite difficult and 23% it was very difficult.

When asked which lessons were learnt from the 2015 qualification information part of the NMDS-SC that then helped with the 2016 return, the most mentioned theme (29%) was around beginning to gather qualifications data earlier. For example, one local authority told us how they changed the time they sent out the spreadsheet for staff to fill in with their qualifications details to “before the school summer holidays... as there is an increased level of annual leave during this time which delayed responses previously”. Other common themes included: using the previous year’s data as a starting point for the return (16%), and ensuring that qualifications data is updated when new staff start (13%).

Support offered by Skills for Care

The chart below shows which NMDS-SC resources were used most frequently (numbers in brackets to the right of the resources) and how useful each resource was.



In 2015 the most useful resources were the support service by call or email (98% very useful or quite useful) followed by the FAQs (96% very useful or quite useful), in 2016 support call or email is still the most useful resource with 100% of authorities who responded finding it very useful or quite useful. Some further feedback we received from Local Authorities about the Skills for Care Support Team included: *“I wanted to particularly thank your advisors ... who I telephoned frequently on the days before completion. They were very patient and knowledgeable”*.

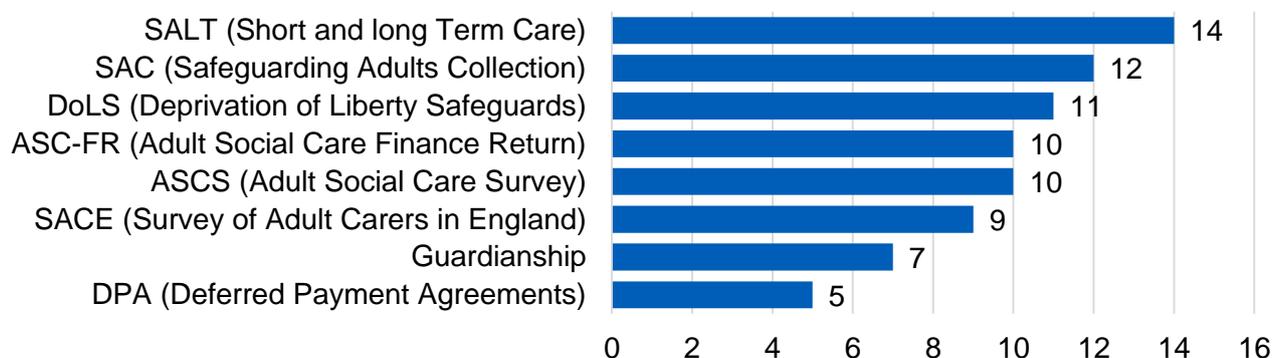
When asked to provide any good practice ideas tips to incorporate NMDS-SC into business-as-usual or things to avoid, comments included; building collecting NMDS-SC data into the new starter’s induction process and ensuring that multiple people in the organisation have the knowledge to complete the return.

Questions asked by NHS Digital

NHS Digital also provided three questions to be included in this short survey. The first asked for details of the quality assurance and audit arrangements of this data, the most.

common theme in the responses was about checking the HR data regularly (29%), either with the service or individual staff members. Other things mentioned were holding a lessons learnt meeting with service managers after the return window and comparing the current year's data to the previous year's return.

NHS Digital also asked about which other adult social care returns run by NHS Digital the authorities also collected data for:



Finally, NHS Digital also asked about how councils used the elements of the publication. This question was not particularly well answered (12 out of 52 responding LAs), however of these, 2 councils told us that they used the data they collected to respond to freedom of information requests.

The final report, called 'Personal Social Services: Staff of Social Services Departments at 30 September - England, 2016' will be published on the NHS Digital website in early February 2017, please follow links for Social Care workforce or [click here](#).

More information

For help and information about completing your NMDS-SC please visit the '[Local Authority One Stop Shop 2017](#)' page on the NMDS-SC website.

For a summary report about the adult social care sector and workforce in your local authority area please visit the NMDS-SC website, [here](#).

For bespoke analysis of workforce information at local level or to answer any specific questions you have about the adult social care workforce please contact analysis@skillsforcare.org.uk. Example topics include; workforce size and structure, employment patterns, provision of care for people with learning disabilities, dementia, mental health issues etc., recruitment and retention issues, workforce demographics, pay, qualification rates and future workforce forecasts. Also trend analysis, economic contribution or effects of the new National Living Wage.

For more information on Skills for Care and how the NMDS-SC can benefit your area please visit our website at: <http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/nmds-sc>. To be kept up to date with news from Skills for Care please join our mailing list by visiting myaccount.skillsforcare.org.uk and select your areas of interest or for the latest reports, briefings and infographics from the NMDS-SC, please also follow us on twitter [@SfC_NMDS_SC](#).