



nmds-sc briefing

Issue 15 - Improvements made to NMDS-SC over the past year

A range of improvements have been made to the National Minimum Data Set for Social Care (NMDS-SC) in 2010 -11 in response to feedback and requests by employers and other stakeholders. This briefing describes these developments which should considerably enhance the benefits to employers using the NMDS-SC.

Enabling information sharing with the Care Quality Commission (CQC)

Under the Health and Social Care Act 2008, all adult social care providers who provide regulated activities are required to be registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC). Once a provider is registered, CQC will monitor whether they continue to meet the [essential standards of safety and quality](#)¹ and will use a range of information to inform this process.

Results of a recent employer consultation strongly supported information being shared directly with CQC from NMDS-SC. NMDS-SC data from CQC registered providers can now be shared with CQC to minimise the amount of information they subsequently need to collect from social care employers as part of the compliance monitoring process.

When an employer logs in to NMDS-SC they need to confirm that they are happy for their information to be shared. They can check the permissions they have allowed by viewing their establishment details and 'editing' if necessary. To ensure the data that CQC receives is accurate, employers are asked to check that the information they have entered into their NMDS-SC account is up to date.

A first series of data items from NMDS-SC has now been shared with CQC. CQC are using this data to develop indicators for the Quality and Risk Profile for each regulated provider of adult social care services (including where services are provided in health settings). Quality and Risk Profiles are being developed to enable CQC to assess the level of risk of a provider not meeting the essential standards and prompt front line regulatory activity.

¹ Please see <http://www.cqc.org.uk/usingcareservices/aneWSsystemofregulation.cfm> for more information



The first series of data items from NMDS-SC includes data on vacancies, turnover rates and the ratio of temporary to permanent staff. Work will take place over the next few months to develop indicators based on worker data e.g. qualifications by job role. **No individual will be identifiable from the data shared with CQC.** The following data items will not be shared: workers' pay, sickness absence, age/date of birth, ethnicity, nationality, country of birth, year of arrival in the UK, or workers' additional hours worked in the last 7 days. Instead benchmarks will be developed from anonymised NMDS-SC data to inform the QRP for regulated providers.

The main service categories and service user groups were changed to fully align with the new CQC categories as of the 1st October 2010. For more information on the detailed consultation with employers and the final evaluation report please go to the [Skills for Care's website](#)².

For more information about Quality and Risk Profiles please go to [CQC's website](#)³.

Introduction of the Qualification and Credit Framework

The qualifications section of the NMDS-SC was updated in January 2011 to reflect the changes being brought about by the development of the Qualification and Credit Framework (QCF). Over twenty new social care related qualifications and many new units of learning have been introduced to replace those in the National Qualification Framework (NQF).

Following a consultation with employers, all new social care 'full qualifications' within the QCF have been added to the existing set of qualifications held and worked towards covered by the NMDS-SC. Any new qualifications within the QCF will be added over time.

The reason for these changes is that NMDS-SC needs to be able to capture information on all relevant social care qualifications gained nationally and regionally. The QCF provides a new way to recognise and reward skills using a more flexible 'mix and match' approach to meet the different development needs of a diverse workforce, so it is critical the NMDS-SC system is able to easily record the new ways of learning.

Employers can now record the work their workers are doing towards the new Level 2 and 3 Diplomas in Health and Social Care and the Level 5 Diploma in Leadership for Health and Social Care and Children and Young People's Services. In addition there is a range of smaller qualifications for professional development such as the Award in Supporting Individuals with Learning Disabilities and the Certificate in Dementia Care.

The NMDS-SC also has a new training record section created for employers to record training their workers are doing outside the QCF, for example First Aid training, and is designed to help track the overall training profile of the people who work for them. Employers can now record if the training is accredited, when it took place and, if applicable, when it will expire.

Employers can therefore use the NMDS-SC to record and keep up to date information about the qualifications and training of their workforce, making it a great tool to helping support them in evidencing compliance with the CQC requirements.

² Please see <http://www.nmds-sc-online.org.uk/content/view.aspx?id=Proposed%20Changes> for more information

³ Please see <http://www.cqc.org.uk/guidanceforprofessionals/adultsocialcare/ourmonitoringofcompliance/qualityandriskprofiles.cfm> for more details



Individuals who employ their own care and support staff

The nature of social care is changing with increasing numbers of people employing their own care and support staff through direct payments from local authorities or other sources of funding. This is in line with the Coalition Government's confirmation that personalisation through the provision of personal budgets and direct payments as set out in the Vision for Adult Social Care (November 2010) will continue.

Individuals who employ their own care and support staff (direct employers)⁴ now have access to a new questionnaire asking questions relevant only to them. Full guidance has been added to the Resources and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) section of the NMDS-SC Online website to help direct employers. When creating a new account all users are asked to select whether they are an establishment or an individual who employs their own care. Employers who select 'individual who employs their own care and support staff' will enter the new questionnaire.

Over 320 direct employers were registered on NMDS-SC by end of March 2011. Data from this group will help with the planning of future workforce training and development for personal assistants and other directly employed staff.

Migrant Workers

Over the past year it has become even clearer to social care employers and to other major stakeholders that it is essential to assess the significance of migrant labour in the overall supply of and demand for labour in social care. This information is currently not available from other sources. It was agreed that three additional questions should be added to the NMDS-SC worker questionnaire to establish a worker's migrant status.

1. Nationality (UK or other/specified)
2. Country of birth (using the same list of countries as in the Labour Force Survey)
3. Year of arrival in the UK (if country of birth not UK/Channel Islands/Isle of Man)

Data from NMDS-SC has been used by employer organisations in making the case for the need for migrant workers in the social care sector. The latest data demonstrates that 13% of social care workers are from countries outside the European Economic Area (EEA). Detailed findings on migrant workers can be found in [Briefing 14](#)⁵.

Improvements to the NMDS-SC

Improvements have been made to the NMDS-SC 'My Worker List' report following feedback from employers. The report now includes a full list all of all workers at an establishment highlighting in red where there are missing data items for each individual worker. The report assisted those employers who applied for Training Strategy Implementation (TSI) funding from Skills for Care, helping them to identify what data they still needed to enter to fulfil the eligibility criteria relating to NMDS-SC completion.

The establishment information report is currently being improved and will be available at the end of June 2011. We are also improving the system to make it easier for large employers to upload large volumes of NMDS-SC data through the secure website.

⁴ Skills for Care have termed this group direct employers to distinguish them from other categories of employers

⁵ Please see <http://www.nmds-sc-online.org.uk/research/researchdocs.aspx?id=1> for Briefing 14- Migrant workers

E learning for Healthcare (eLFH)

Skills for Care continues to offer free access to e-End of Life Care for All training to adult social care employers registered with the NMDS-SC. The Department of Health e-Learning for Healthcare (e-LfH) is a free and innovative e-learning resource that aims to enhance the training and knowledge of all those involved in delivering end of life care.

To enable access to this training a new function has been added to NMDS-SC to include a code for employers to pass on to their staff to enable registration with eLFH. This ensures that only those genuinely working in health and/or social care can access this training. This code is available on the “my establishment page” along with guidance on how to use this code to access the training. Please see [more information](#)⁶ on this and how to access the system. As at the end of March 2011, 1,253 workers within 653 establishments have successfully **registered** to use e-LFH and have been provided with a user name and password. Of those registered, 343 workers from within 207 establishments have actively **logged on and used** the system.

Further changes made to NMDS-SC at the request of employers

The table below lists recent improvements that have made to NMDS-SC at the request of employers who use the system.

Improvements to NMDS-SC

A warning has been added to the worker page	This is a pop up warning if a worker is added or deleted to remind users to update their organisation data to reflect the changes in staff.
A new mandatory total staff question has been added	A new question to capture the number of permanent and temporary staff working at the establishment questionnaire.
A last update date has been added to the Parent Establishment report	This is so the parent/HQ of a large organisation can see when one of their subsidiaries was last updated.
Improved sort options have been added to the worker page columns	The sort function on workers has been extended to include the option to sort on every item of data within the worker record.

Future developments

In response to feedback from employers new reporting functions are being developed, which will include key information such as turnover, pay and qualifications. Work is in hand to develop reporting ‘dashboards’ that will allow employers to see in a very user friendly format key data relating to their establishment/organisation and the wider locality. This will maximise the benefits and return to employers on the investment of time they have made in submitting the data.

Skills for Care is continuously looking at ways of improving the user experience of social care employers who use NMDS-SC. If you would like to make a suggestion to improve the system then please [contact us](#)⁷ or phone the NMDS-SC Help Desk on 0845 873 0129.

⁶ Please see http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/news/latest_news/e-learning_NMDS-SC.aspx on this and how to access the system.

⁷ Please go to: <https://www.nmds-sc-online.org.uk/contactus/>