



The care market has had some high profile coverage recently over care quality and future provision worries for residents. Abbeyfield, a respected brand and care provider wanted a robust system of assurance which did not rely on the CQC or other bodies.

The Abbeyfield Society is well known as one of the largest UK “brands” in housing and care homes for older people. The brand comprises many independent local Abbeyfield Societies each with homes across the country and the Abbeyfield Society itself which runs many houses and over 22 care homes.

Traditional survey problems

The Abbeyfield Society (Abbeyfield) had surveyed their residents annually themselves as a matter of routine but turned to CoMetrica this year to help them improve the usefulness and efficiency of the process. Traditionally survey questionnaires were based on the requirements of the former Housing Corporation (now the Tenant Services Association (TSA)) or the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

Abbeyfield’s survey needs

Recently, the emphasis has moved away from prescriptive surveys to being able to demonstrate inclusivity and the means by which residents views are heard and acted upon. This gave the opportunity to start with a new set of questions and collect these and report the results more efficiently.

To give greater confidence to residents, it was vital that the surveys would be anonymous unless the resident chose to reveal themselves.

Reducing burden

The annual survey had been a burden for Abbeyfield staff who had to create the questionnaires, print them, dispatch, and chase up the responses and then manually input the results. Analysis of the results was time consuming and very limited in terms of functionality. The process was also slow and from the point of measurement to results took weeks.

The benefit of the COM-Q service Abbeyfield chose was that the whole process was fully managed by CoMetrica from beginning to end leaving Abbeyfield to focus on the comprehensive results.

Fully Managed Process

CoMetrica helped Abbeyfield choose the questions and set the scores against the responses which would allow easy comparisons later.

The questions were organised into themes of **Satisfaction, Quality and Being Heard** so that the COM-Q system could produce theme scores in addition to individual question response counts.

CoMetrica set up very simple spread sheets for each home to complete and these were encrypted before being returned to CoMetrica.

CoMetrica then generated the personalised questionnaires for each resident and despatched them to each home liaising with the home managers over completion deadlines.

Residents completed the surveys without the assistance of staff but with the help of relatives or others if required.

Responses were returned to CoMetrica and were entered into the COM-Q database where the results were immediately available to Abbeyfield on-line.

Homes could see the anonymous comments made by residents themselves and the graphical reports showing their own performance. These reports in the COM-Q system are live so just clicking on a link immediately produces a chart of the most up-to-date results that day.

Comprehensive service

As part of the service provided for Abbeyfield, CoMetrica then wrote up the results into the following documents for Abbeyfield:

- Board Report Summary
- Management Team report
- Management team presentation
- Individual Home reports

Quick, organised results

One of the problems with basic multiple choice question surveys is that it is almost impossible to compare the results of two or more services or units. Basic “% Satisfied or Very Satisfied” type results are difficult to compare and themes such as satisfaction may have several questions each with variable results making over-all comparisons impossible.

The COM-Q system, in addition to reporting response counts (% satisfied etc.) also assigns weighted scores to question responses automatically and generates overall theme scores.

This allows a single figure to be used to compare themes such as satisfaction, quality of life, being heard, food quality etc.

This means high-level reports can be used to monitor trends and any variations can be quickly pinpointed to an individual unit or question. Trends are also much easier to spot and you can modify questions over time without losing overall continuity of results.

Measures used by Abbeyfield

Theme	Questions
Satisfaction	2
Quality of Life	5
Being Heard	4
Comments	1

Benefits of the COM-Q Service for Abbeyfield

The key benefit for Abbeyfield was that they did not have to deal with any questionnaires themselves or analyse any results. The fully managed COM-Q service from CoMetrica handled everything so all Abbeyfield had to do was review the results. The consistency of approach meant that all of Abbeyfield's homes got their own personalised report suitable for use with external bodies and the Care management team got more detailed comparative reports.

Results

Response rate

390 residents responded out of 558 who received a questionnaire, a response rate of 70%. Considering this was aimed at all residents, including those with dementia, the response rate was very high and delivered highly representative results. No home had a rate significantly below 50% and many were over 90%.

Theme Scores

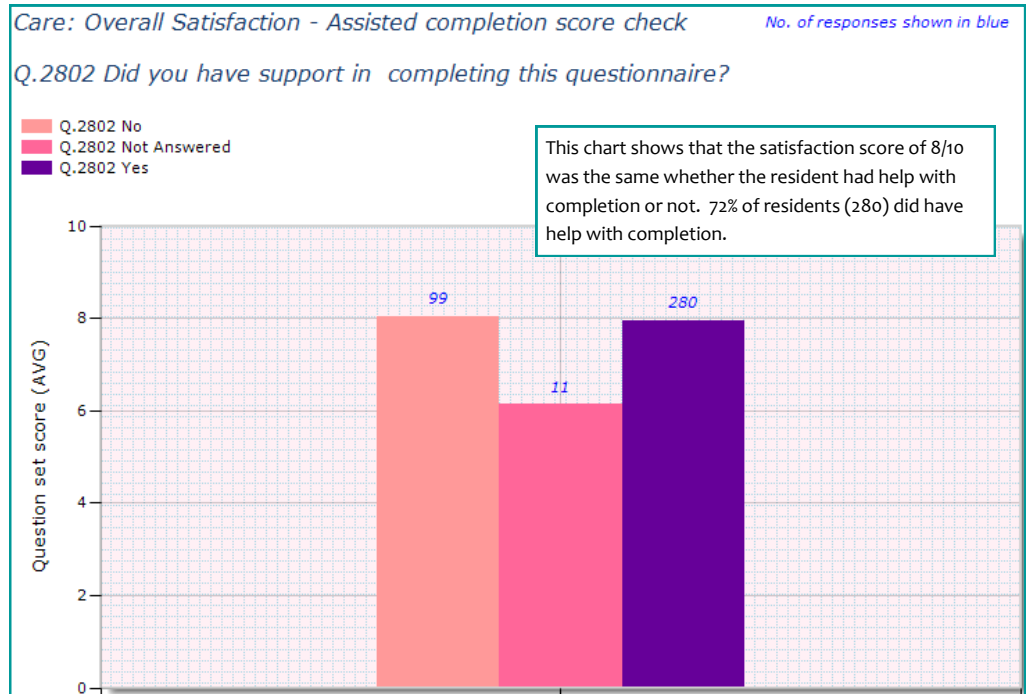
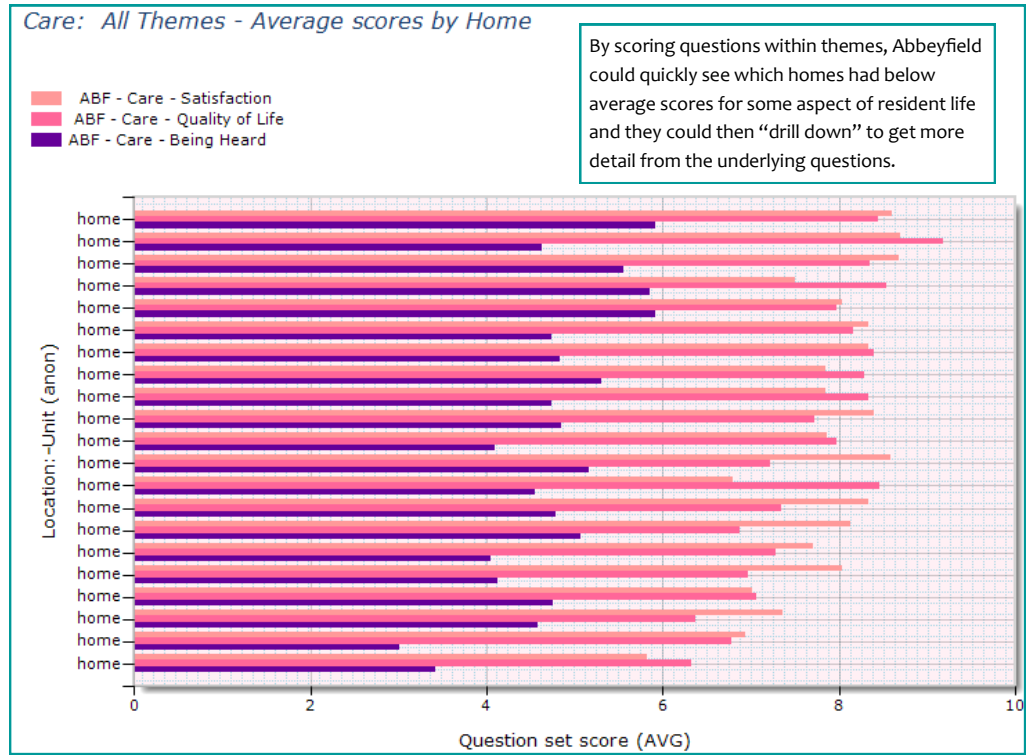
The ability to produce scores for overall themes makes comparison much easier and enable trends to be identified.

Helena Little, Director of Care Services for Abbeyfield said "having CoMetrica do all the questionnaire handling and analysis saved us a lot of time and the consistency of implementation and analysis established a useful baseline from which to move forward. We are now looking to make continuous resident experience measurement a standard part of our care services."

Detailed analysis

Where single topics are being measured such as Privacy & Confidentiality, statistical tools can be applied to demonstrate the significance of any variation seen in the scores e.g. between units. Using this feature, Abbeyfield were able to allay any concerns where there was non-significant variation.

The flow of anonymous comments back from residents was useful in supporting the theme scores achieved and giving evidence of the inclusion and influence which the CQC are now seeking from Care homes.



Conclusion

The COM-Q system proved itself as a means of easy collection and analysis of resident experience. Abbeyfield now aims to make resident measurement an on-going process to support the day to day management of the homes and provide standardised reports for individual home, central management, board and external use.

Further Information about the COM-Q service can be obtained from Stuart Mathieson on 07973 212306 or via email Stuart.Mathieson@CoMetrica.co.uk More case studies are available on the website: www.CoMetrica.co.uk