

**INFORMATION ON
OBTAINING THE VIEWS
OF USERS OF ACCIDENT
AND EMERGENCY SERVICES**

***CONSUMER FEEDBACK
RESOURCE***

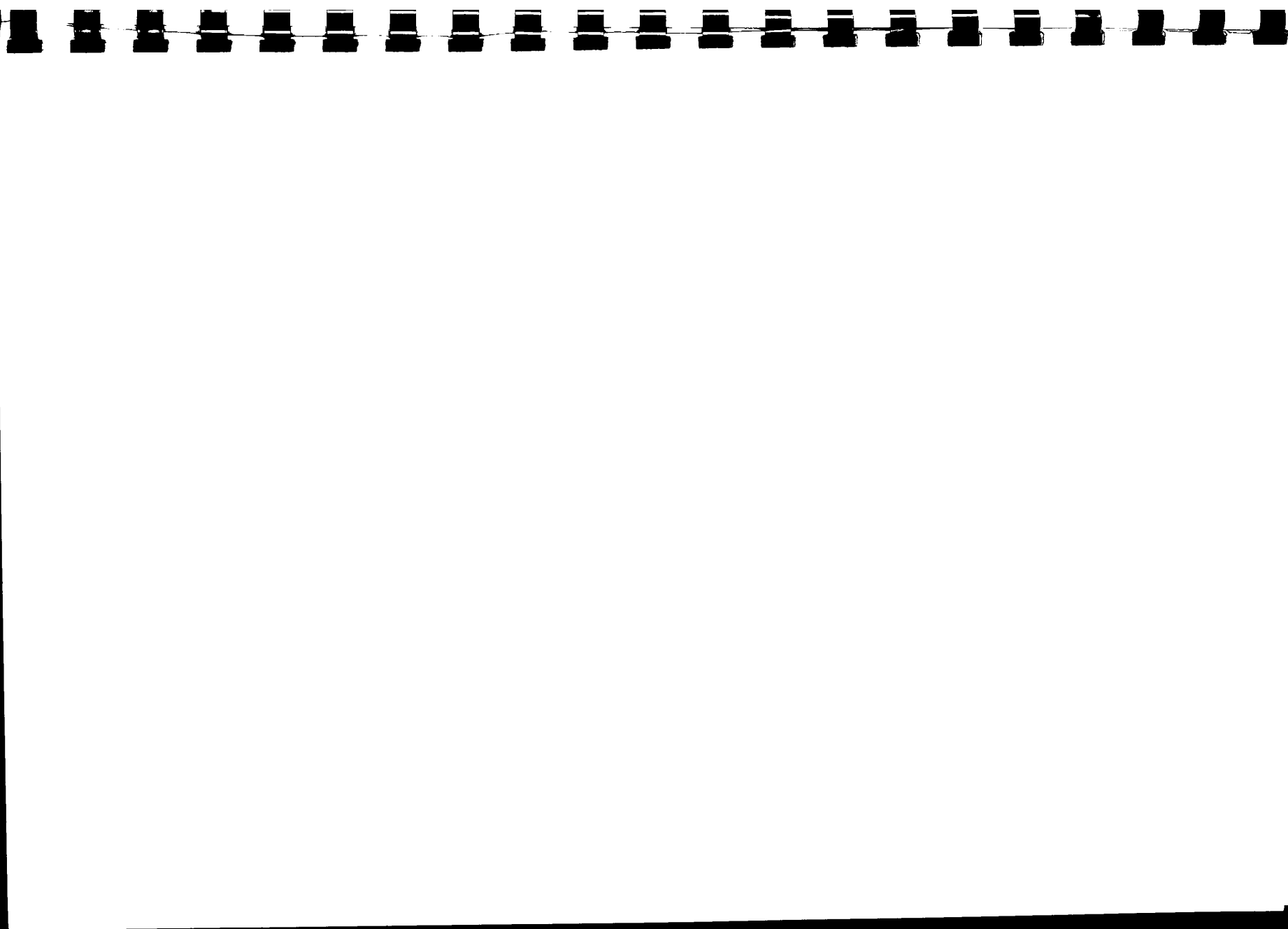
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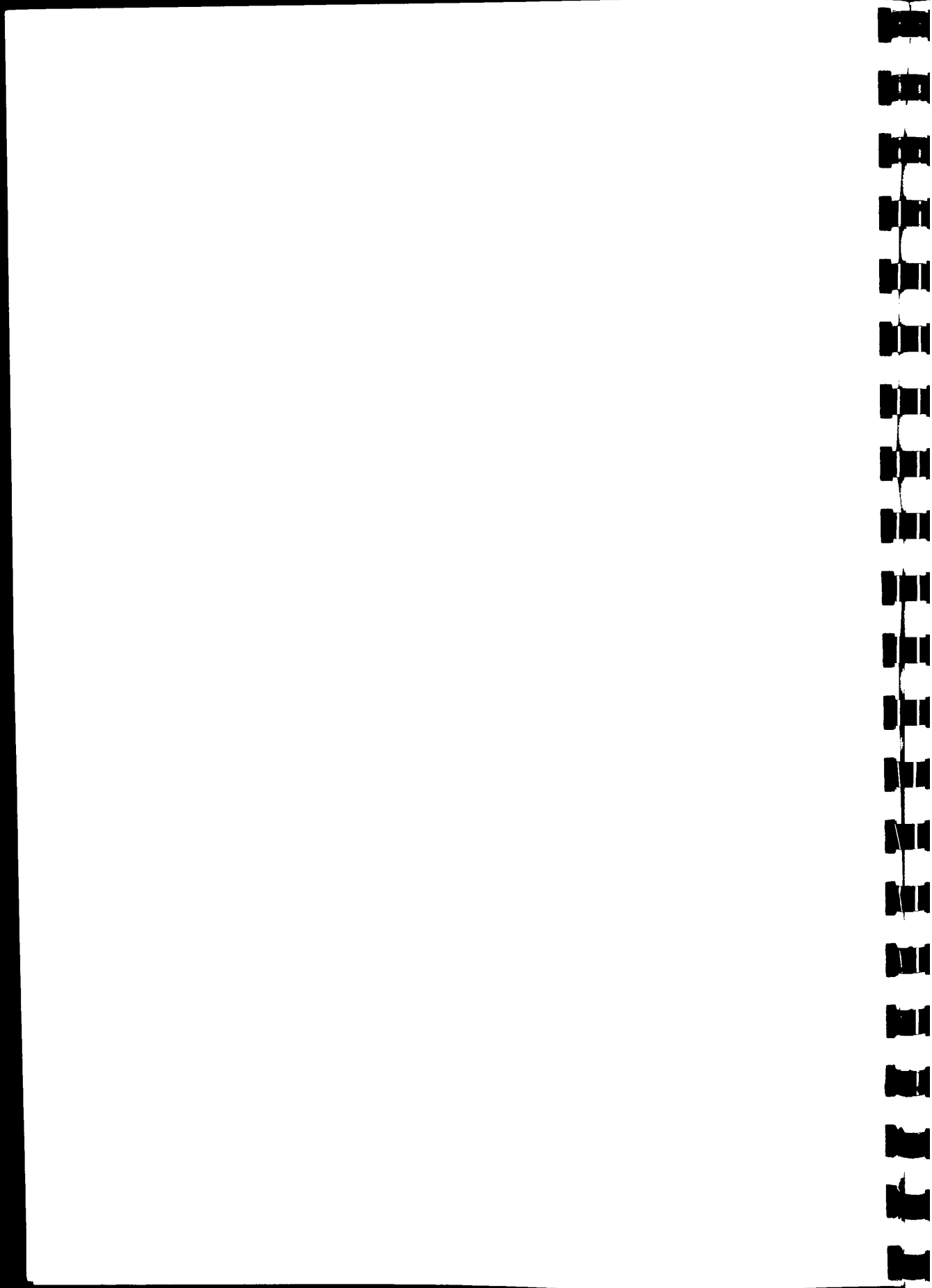


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INTRODUCTION

These information sheets will be of use to health service staff or Community Health Councils who wish to find out the views of users of accident and emergency services.

The purpose of these sheets is:

- 1 to give some useful reading references for this field
- 2 to give details of some of the current major projects
- 3 to list some organisations which may be able to carry out research
- 4 to provide a checklist of what appear to be the most important areas for questions to ask attenders at accident and emergency departments.

Information on the use of feedback methods is available separately, and is also provided in full detail in McIver S. Obtaining the Views of Users of Health Services. London: King's Fund Centre, 1991.

Details of any type of consumer feedback project using survey or non-survey methods are welcomed by the Consumer Feedback Resource so that we can develop the advice on accident and emergency services. Please send information to:

Shirley McIver
Consumer Feedback Resource
King's Fund Centre
126 Albert Street
London
NW1 7NF
Tel: 071-267 6111

July 1991

USEFUL READING REFERENCES

The texts in this list are chosen because they cover issues that arise in consumer feedback or quality improvement in accident and emergency services.

The publications below have not been formally evaluated but provide a guide to what is available.

King's Fund Centre publications can be obtained from Bailey Distribution Limited, Learoyd Road, Mountfield Industrial Estate, New Romney, Kent, TN28 8XU or to personal callers only from The Bookshop, The King's Fund Centre, 126 Albert Street, London, NW1 7NF.

The King's Fund Centre has a reference library which holds many of the publications mentioned. Photocopies of journal articles ONLY (not books or reports) can be supplied at 20 pence a page plus postage and packing. However you are advised to try your local library first.

Callaghan D, Caple T., *Managing Customer Relations: The elements of good practice in accident and emergency and outpatient departments*. London, North West Thames Regional Health Authority, 1986. (PS17(947))

This report details a project to find out the customers' views of the service they have received in both accident and emergency and outpatient departments at six different units within the region. The method used is the critical incident technique. Checklists for the effective management of customer relations which were developed from the study are included in the report.

Institute of Health Services Management. *Managing A and E: A guide to good practice in management of accident and emergency departments*. London, Institute of Health Services Management, 1988.

This booklet covers the main criticisms users have made about accident and emergency services and suggests how managers might deal with these criticisms of the service.

Royal College of Surgeons of England, Working Party of the Management of Patients with Major Injuries. *Report of the Working Party on the Management of Patients with Major Injuries*. London, Royal College of Surgeons, 1988.

This report analyses whether injured people are being managed as well as they could be by the emergency services. Recommendations are made on the structuring, staffing and support services of accident and emergency departments.

Southmead Health Authority, Department of Nursing Advice/Consumer Relations, District Information Service. *Survey into the Waiting Times in the Accident and Emergency Department*. Southmead Health Authority, 1988.

The object of this survey was to find out if there were any differences in waiting times in relation to shift patterns and any areas where policy changes may be indicated. The method used was to note the time at which the patients underwent various procedures from arriving at the department to leaving the department.

CURRENT PROJECTS

These projects are ones that are funded to develop good practice in the field of consumer feedback or quality improvement in accident and emergency services.

Survey of Accident and Emergency Service Users' Views
Polygon Research
Marvell Hall
Cottingham Road
Hull
HU6 7RT
Tel: 0482-492776

Qualitative and quantitative surveys have been undertaken for Hull Royal Infirmary to help the hospital clarify initiatives for their quality programme.

Jane Chapman
Senior Nurse
Quality Assurance
District Offices
Northwick Park Hospital
Watford Road
Harrow
HA1 3UJ

A project to obtain the views of users of accident and emergency services is currently being planned. This project is part of a series of projects to assess customer satisfaction.

Jill Bryan
Staff Nurse
Accident and Emergency Department
Hinchinbrooke Hospital
Huntingdon
PE18 8NT

Continuous departmental surveys are undertaken in this accident and emergency department to find out users' views.

ORGANISATION CONTACT LIST

This is a list of organisations offering advice and assistance to those seeking to obtain information from users of accident and emergency services. This list is not comprehensive and inclusion does not imply endorsement by the King's Fund Centre.

CASPE Ltd
14 Palace Court
Bayswater
London
W2 4HT
Tel: 071-229 8739

Health Policy Advisory Unit
PO Box 344
Sheffield
S1 1AZ

Polygon Research
Humberside College of Higher Education
246 Cottingham Road
Hull
HU6 7RT
Tel: 0482-49776

AREAS FOR QUESTIONS

This list contains suggestions for areas which could be covered in a survey to obtain the views of users of accident and emergency services. The list has been compiled from previous research into the views of accident and emergency service users but it is not intended to be exhaustive.

TYPE OF USER

Questions about this topic will establish pattern of usage of accident and emergency, responder's knowledge of accident and emergency routines and the influence of the responder's background on answers given. Areas include:

- Is the responder an emergency, non-emergency or inappropriate attender?
- How many times has the responder been before?
- Establish why inappropriate attenders have not received medical attention from their general practitioner.
- The priorities of non-emergency patients are: no excessive waiting, competent and caring staff, good explanations, and environmental comforts.
- The priorities of emergency patients are: immediate pain/symptom relief, reassurance, staff competence, explanations and communication with other parties.
- Are the anxieties of elderly people who live at home on their own accounted for when patients are discharged, and is advice given about care of wounds?

WAITING

- How long has the user waited before attending the accident and emergency department following the injury?
- How long does the user wait in different parts of accident and emergency?
- Are users and carers given information by staff about delays?

ORGANISATION

- What is done to inform the local community about appropriate and non-appropriate attendances?
- Are users seen by a triage nurse?
- Do users feel anxious about missing their turn?
- Are relatives allowed enough access to patients?
- Are diagnostic tests given on the same day and does the user understand why he/she is not being x-rayed (if applicable)?
- How long do users wait for diagnostic tests?
- Do users feel safe waiting in the department, e.g. are they disturbed by other users waiting?

ENVIRONMENT

A poor environment or facilities increases the stress of waiting. Problem areas may include the following:

- Difficult car parking.
- Obscure signposting.
- Cleanliness of toilets and speed of cleaning spillages.
- Availability of refreshments, toys for children, up-to-date magazines, literature in ethnic languages, telephones.
- Provision of a separate waiting area for children, smoking and non-smoking areas, a private room for confidential conversations and bereaved relatives, a private room for victims of violent attacks.
- Supply of suitable dressing gowns.
- Decor, temperature, lighting, noise, graffiti on walls and vandalism of furniture.
- Design of the reception area.

ACCESS

- Is there space near the department to drop off and pick up patients?
- Are users given money and suitable clothing to get home when necessary?
- Is public transport easily available?

INFORMATION

More information may be needed about the following:

- The facilities in the department.
- The condition of the patient and the treatment given before discharge.
- The condition of patients for waiting relatives.
- Information given to general practitioners.
- What the user needs to do next.

Patients' understanding of verbal and written information needs to be checked.

METHODOLOGICAL

Interviewing users in accident and emergency departments can be stressful. Callaghan and Caple (see Useful Reading References Section) conducted their interviews in the department but other surveyors have conducted interviews at home or on the ward. Observation is also a useful technique in accident and emergency departments. (See Methods leaflet for more details.)

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The King's Fund Centre is a health services development agency which promotes improvements in health and social care. We do this by working with people in health services, in social services, in voluntary agencies, and with the users of their services. We encourage people to try out new ideas, provide financial or practical support to new developments, and enable experiences to be shared through workshops, conferences and publications. Our aim is to ensure that good developments in health and social care are widely taken up.