



healthwatch
York

Home Care Services

October 2017

A report based on local peoples' experience

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Home Care

What is Home Care?

Home Care (also called domiciliary care, social care, or in-home care) is supportive care provided in your own home. This is care provided by paid carers, whether by the local council or by individuals themselves. It is not unpaid care provided by family, friends or neighbours. The paid support helps with activities of daily life, such as:

- Getting up
- Getting dressed
- Getting washed
- Preparing and eating food
- Going to the toilet

National and Local Picture

Home care services make a major contribution to the wellbeing and safety of older and disabled people. Healthwatch England compiled a report: Home care services: What people told Healthwatch about their experiences, analysing the experiences of over 3000 people, their families and front line staff, across 54 local areas between August 2015 and June 2017.

Their main findings were that although people were generally very happy with their home care services, improvement was needed in the following areas:

- Care planning - People spoke a lot about staff who were unfamiliar with their clients' care plans
- Skills and qualifications –some said that some care workers lacked experience and basic skills, such as the ability to wash someone or make them breakfast
- Consistency and continuity - All local Healthwatch found problems with staff coming at different times and even missing appointments
- Communication and feedback – Providers need to make greater and more regular use of feedback to address problems early and prevent minor issues turning into complaints

These findings reflect the ongoing pressure put on the home care market following reduced government funding for health and social care services nationally. The Care Quality Commission (CQC) State of Adult Social Care 2016/17 report states that: “the quality of health and social care has been maintained despite very real challenges...However, future quality is precarious as the system struggles with increasingly complex demand, access and cost. ... With the complexity of demand increasing across all sectors, the entire health and social care system is at full stretch. The impact on people is particularly noticeable where sectors come together – or fail to come together, as the complex patchwork of health and social care strains at the seams.”

The CQC report states that there are 1.2 million older people with unmet care needs, which has gone up from 1 million in 2015/16. They say there have been delays in adult social care, with 4,000 fewer nursing home beds in 2016/17 than in April 2015, and 780,000 days delayed attributed to adult social care in 2016/17. Staffing has also seen challenges, with 90,000 staff vacancies across adult social care. The complex context in which home care sits can be seen below.¹

Figure 1.12 Are adult social care services closer to the tipping point?



¹ CQC Report: The State of Adult Social Care in England 2016/17

When asked about the state of home care, the Independent Care Group (ICG) commented: “The state of home care nationally, remains perilous. Without additional funding in the sector we will continue to see providers handing back local authority contracts because they are no longer able to deliver them in a viable manner. Starved of resources within the sector, providers are also finding it increasingly difficult to recruit and retain care staff. There remains a real danger of more and more people going without the home care they rely upon.”

There has been an increase in press coverage of issues surrounding social care across the country following reduced funding and increased pressures, with reports of closures to home care agencies across the country². In 2016, a national care agency closed its branch in York, after a rating of inadequate by CQC.³ The Local Government Ombudsmen (LGO) has also seen a 25% rise in the number of complaints nationally about home care in the year 2015/16. There have also been reports about staff recruitment problems and difficulties in keeping staff. A recent study by Unison found that home care workers were concerned about the lack of time they could give to the individuals they cared for. Three out of four said they ‘feared they were compromising the dignity of those in their care because they were pressured to fit in too many visits’⁴.

In November 2016, Healthwatch York reported on the United Kingdom Homecare Association (UKHCA) Report on the funding of older people’s home care across the UK. The report estimated that state-funded home care services were running at a deficit of £513 million in 2016-17, and findings of *The Homecare Deficit 2016* revealed that low prices paid for home care services compromise the safety of those in need of home care, due to insufficient resources and poor training of care workers. Considering that the state purchases more than 4.6 million hours of home care services every week and 873,500 people are estimated to be supported at home to live independently, this has potentially critical implications.

² http://www.yorkpress.co.uk/news/14930695.Social_care_crisis_cannot_be_ignored_ministers_warned/

³ <http://www.yorkpress.co.uk/news/14536072.Yorkcareprovidertocloseafterdamninginspectionreport>

⁴ <http://www.yorkpress.co.uk/news/15565775.OverworkedcarestafftoorushedtoperformjobproperlyUnisonsurvey/>

In York, however, the average pay of direct care staff, managerial staff, and regulated professionals in October 2016 was recorded as above both the regional and national averages.⁵ Qualifications levels are slightly lower than the average in England, with 37% of the workforce in York holding a relevant adult social care qualification.⁶

Why is Healthwatch York looking at Home Care?

Home Care was voted one of the issues the public wanted Healthwatch York to look at in the Work Plan Survey 2015/16. A number of people contacted us regarding their experiences of home care between 2015 and 2017. Conducting this survey allows us to further understand how well supported those receiving Home Care feel in their own homes.

What we did to find out more

We undertook desk research, looking at local media stories and comments about experiences of home care, as well as reviewing the Healthwatch York Feedback Centre and Issues Log.

We ran a survey between October 2016 and January 2017 to gain understanding of people's experiences of home care. Our survey was aimed at people who receive home care services in York. We received 31 responses in total.

Unfortunately at the time we were gathering responses to the survey, the City of York Council were running a similar survey about home care, which they run every 6 months. This may account for the low number of responses we got to our survey. We hope to avoid doing surveys of a similar nature at the same time in the future. We would be happy to work in partnership with organisations such as the City of York Council to make sure that we reach a larger number of the people, and accurately represent the views of the York population.

⁵ Based on analysis from the National Minimum Data Set (NMDS)

⁶ From NMDS-Social Care data, October 2016

What we found out

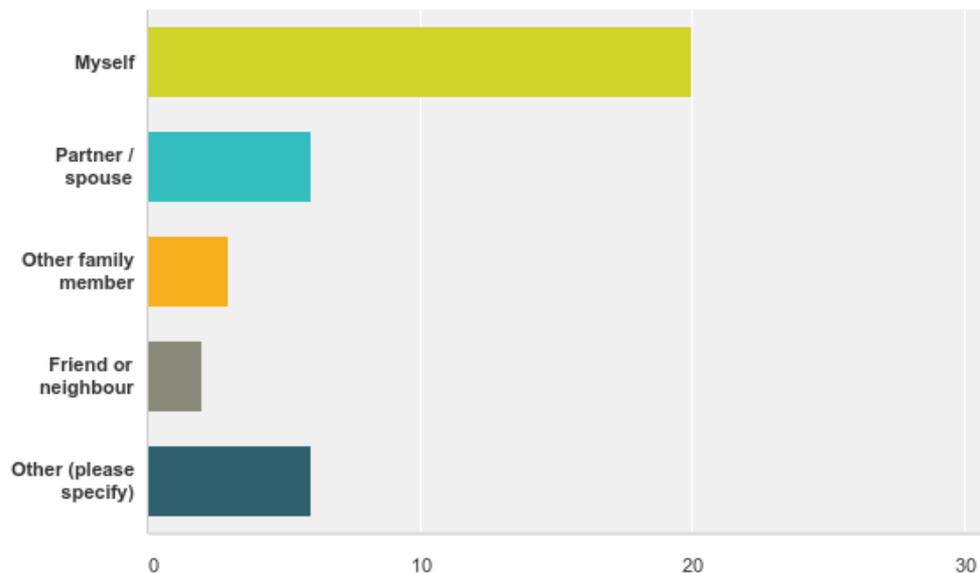
Comments from the Healthwatch York Feedback Centre and Issues Log

Comments from the Healthwatch York Feedback Centre and Issues Log included comments about the difficulty of getting a home care package, as well as getting an appropriate care package to meet the needs of the individual. There were also comments around the poor quality of care received from a home care worker.

Our survey looked at home care services provided by the City of York Council and private agencies. People also talked to us about experiences they have had with the Community Response Team and district nurses, showing the genuine confusion over what is meant by 'home care'. These issues have been logged, and will contribute to any future pieces of work we do in these areas.

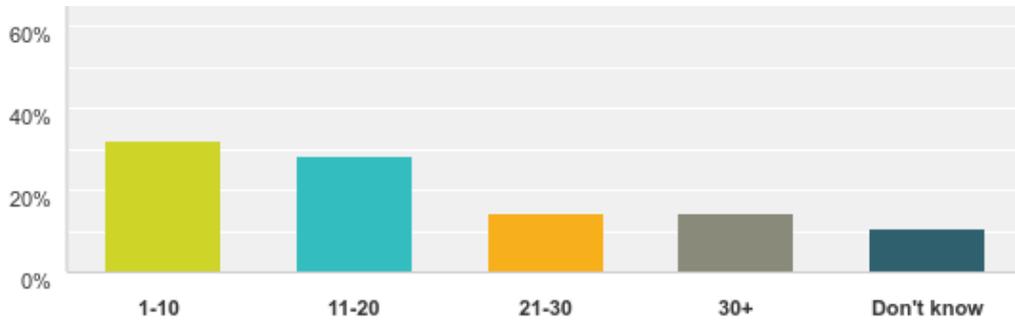
Survey Responses

Q1. Who receives home care services?



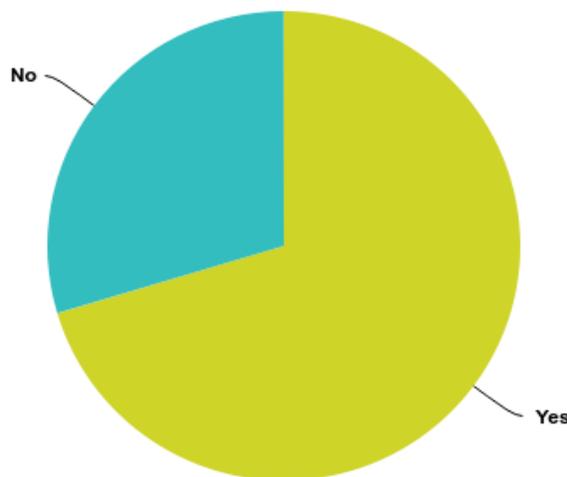
31 people answered in total; 20 of these received homecare themselves. 'Other' included people in supported living.

Q2. How many hours of care do you receive each week?



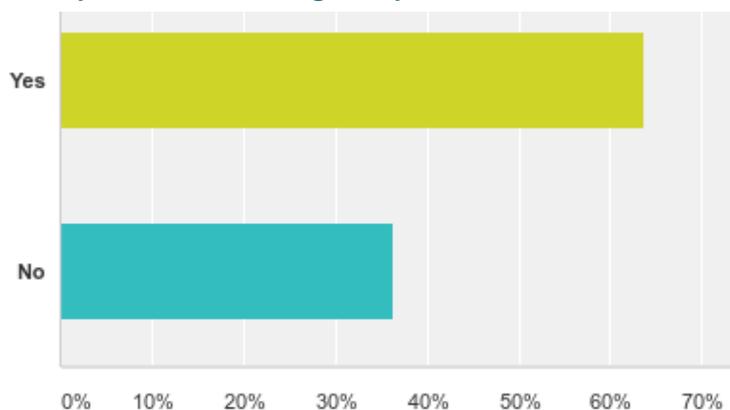
32% of the 28 people who answered this question received between 1 and 10 hours of care each week.

Q3. Do you receive care from more than one person?



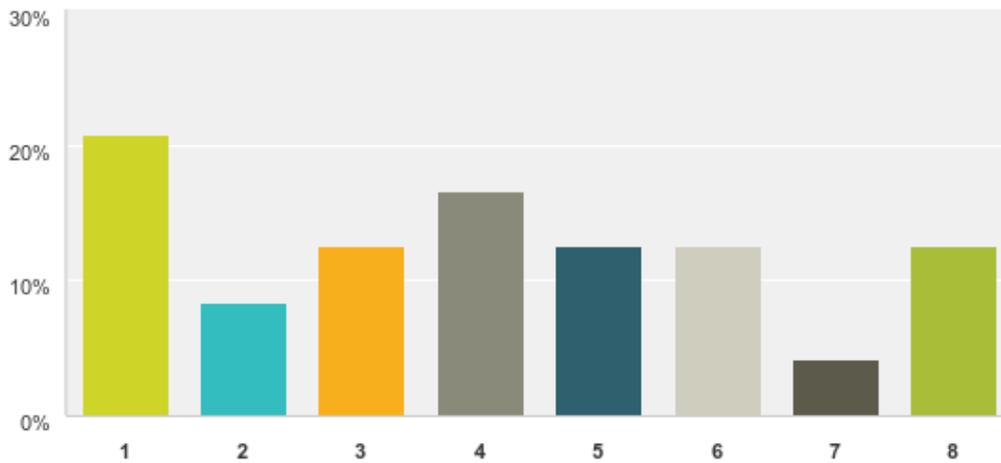
70% stated that they received care from more than one person; 30% said that they did not.

Q4. Are you still waiting for your assessment?



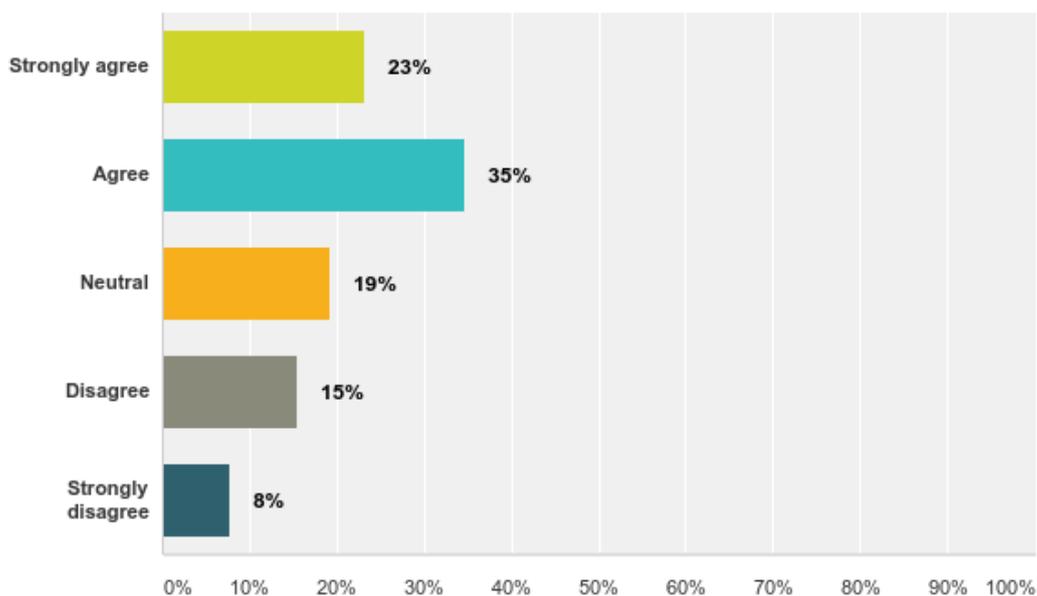
64% of people were still waiting for their assessment, while 36% people were not.

Q5. In an average week, how many different care workers come to your home?



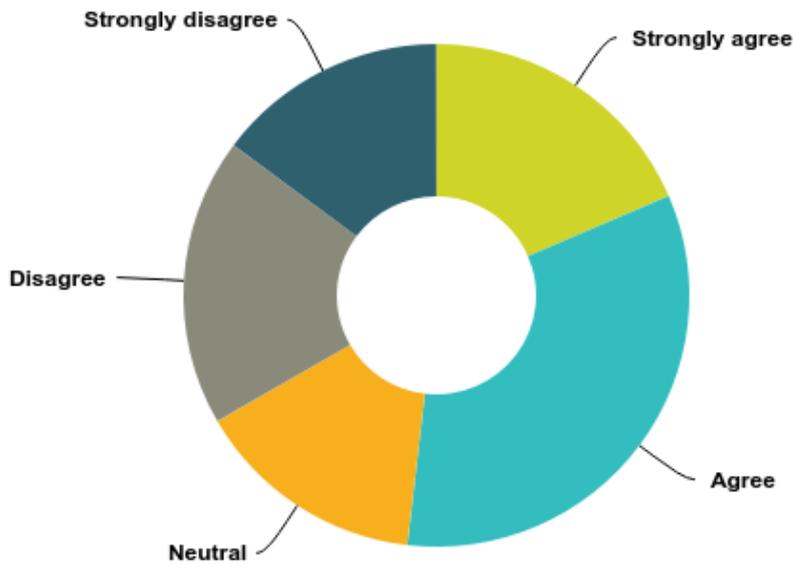
There were a wide range of responses to this question, with over 20% saying that they had the same care worker coming to their home in an average week.

Q6. I always have the same care worker(s)



Comments included: "All the time"; "Varies from week to week"; "Quite a regular team but every day have at least 2 and sometimes 4 different carers"

Q7. I don't mind who comes as the work gets done

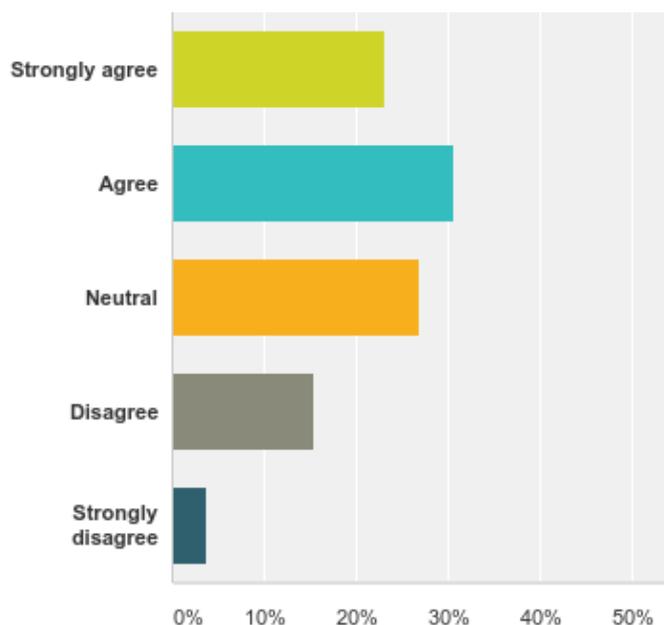


19% said they strongly agreed; 33% said they agreed; 15% reported neutral; 19% said they disagreed; 15% said they strongly disagreed.

Comments included:

- “I get along with all my staff”
- “It is important that the same people come often as they know me and the house and I get to know them. I depend on them being familiar with my situation and needs”
- “I need to get to know the person”

Q8. I can get upset or concerned if my care worker(s) change without notice

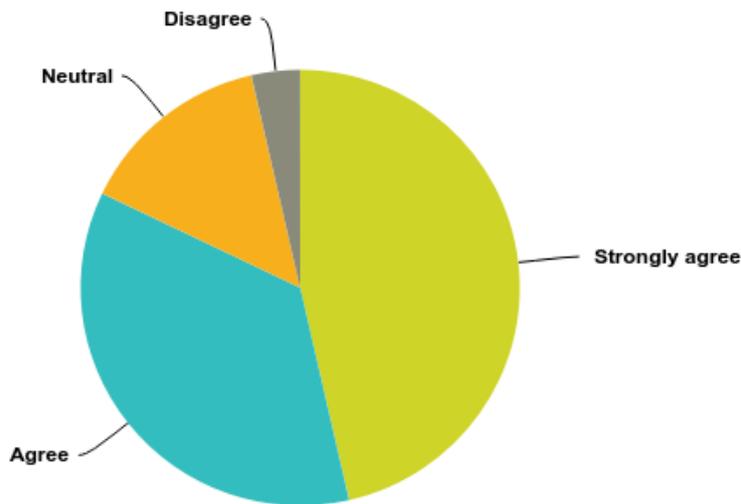


The majority of people said they did get upset or were concerned if their care worker(s) changed without notice.

Comments included:

- “Usually happens and resolved before the day”
- “Continuity is important to me. I depend on them being reliable and aware of my needs and I need to get to know them”

Q9. I’ve built a good relationship with my care worker(s) and look forward to seeing them

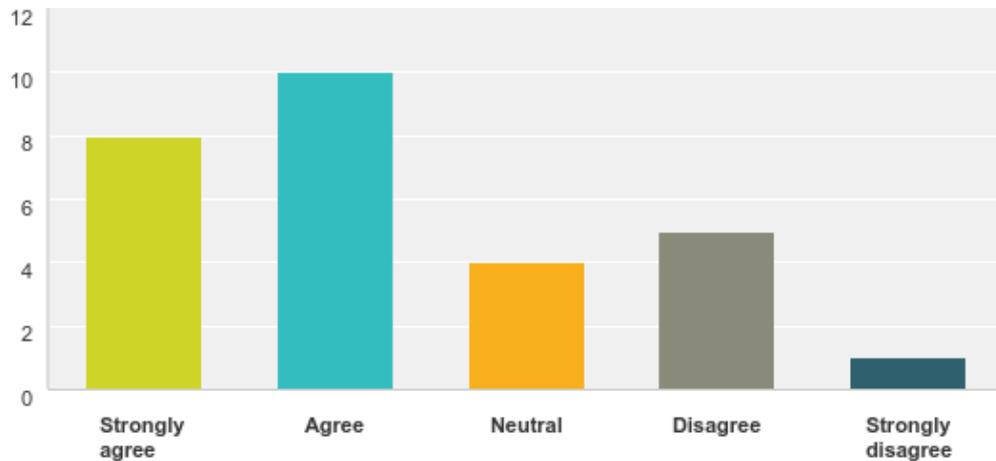


82% of people said they agreed or strongly agreed that they have built a good relationship with their care worker(s).

Comments included:

- “look forward to seeing them”
- “They are humourful and caring. They look after the details and keep me in touch with the world outside. They treat me like someone they are pleased to see. I am pleased to see them and totally rely on their care as I am immobile”
- “My mother has a good relationship with a few of the carers. But there are some who she says don’t do a great job and others who she just doesn’t really like”

Q10. My care worker(s) come at times that suit me

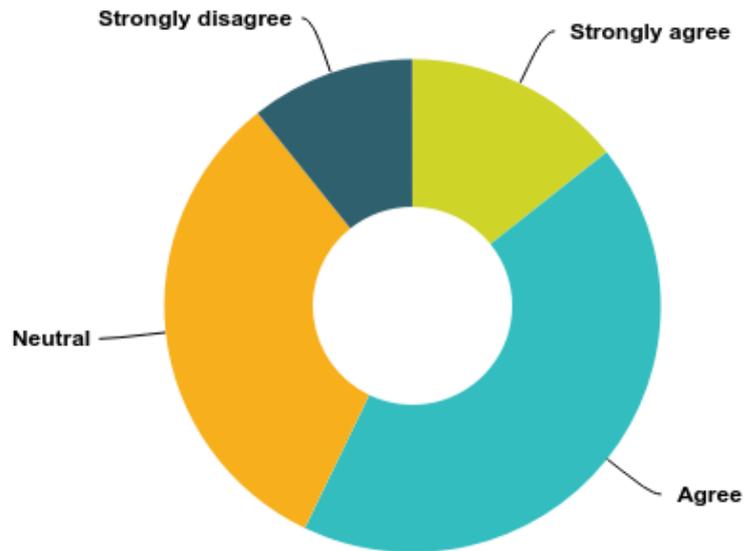


65% of people agreed or strongly agreed that their care worker(s) come at times that suit them. 22% said they disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Comments included:

- “Have never come at times of my choice – have to fit into when they are available”
- “The care agency determine the times for the most part”
- “Pre-arranged time arranged by me and agreed by them”

Q11. My care worker(s) arrive on time

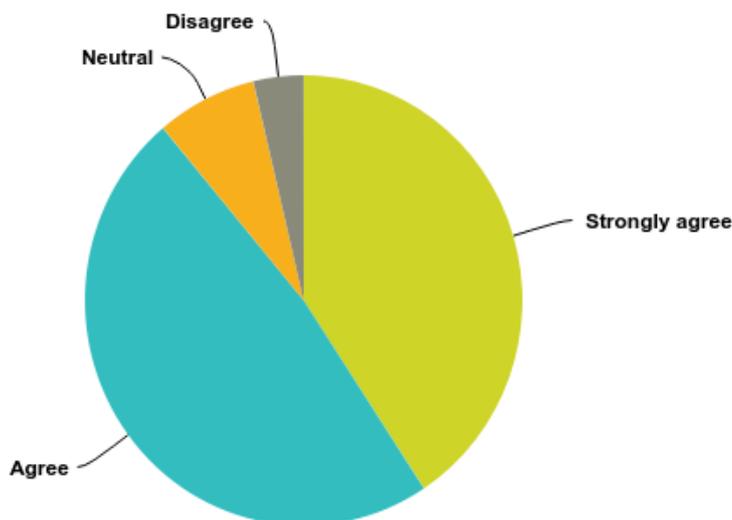


11% said they strongly disagreed that their care worker(s) arrive on time, with 57% said they agreed or strongly agreed.

Comments included:

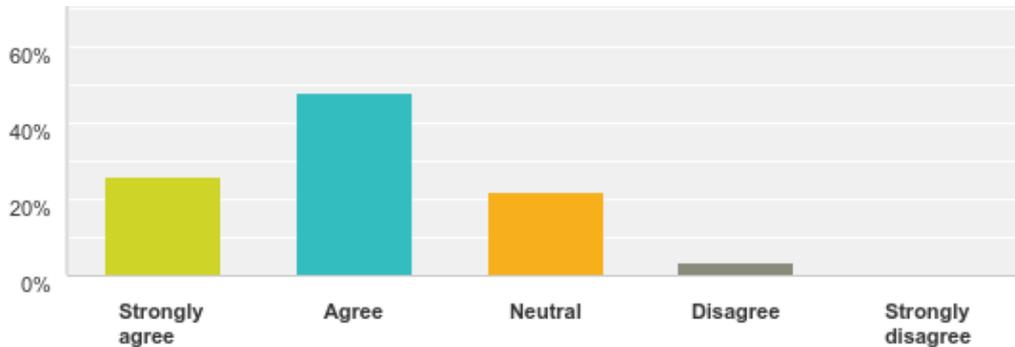
- “They regularly arrive either early or late”
- “Quite good at present but has been extremely bad at times”

Q12. I know what my care worker(s) should be doing



89% of people agreed that they knew what their care worker should be doing.

Q13. My care worker(s) do what they are meant to do

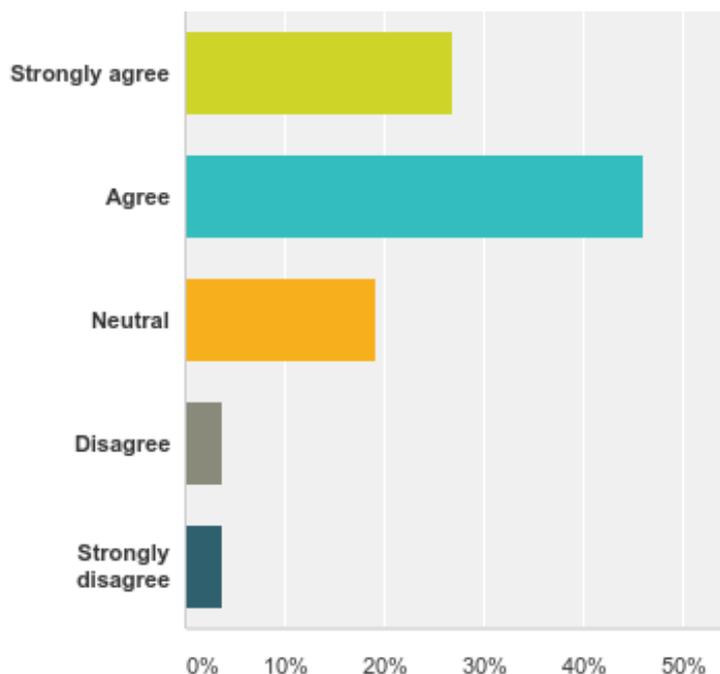


74% agreed or strongly agreed, and only 4% disagreed that their care worker(s) do what they are meant to do.

Comments included:

- “We have clear lists and instructions for people to do things but it is rare for everyone to do everything on the lists/routine well”
- “Sometimes on their phones when they are sitting with us”

Q14. My care worker(s) work the hours as written in my care plan (for example for 30 minute visits they are in my house for 30 minutes)

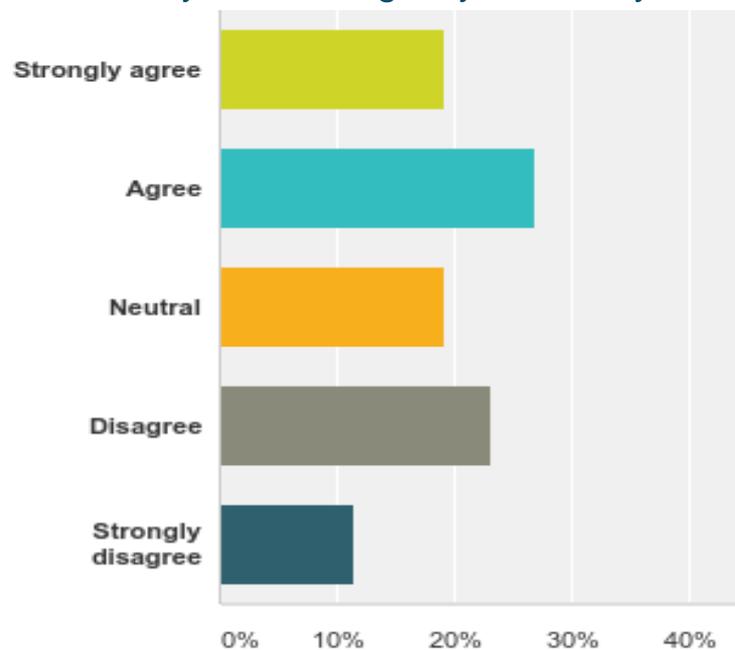


The majority of people agreed or strongly agreed with this question. Only 8% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.

Comments included:

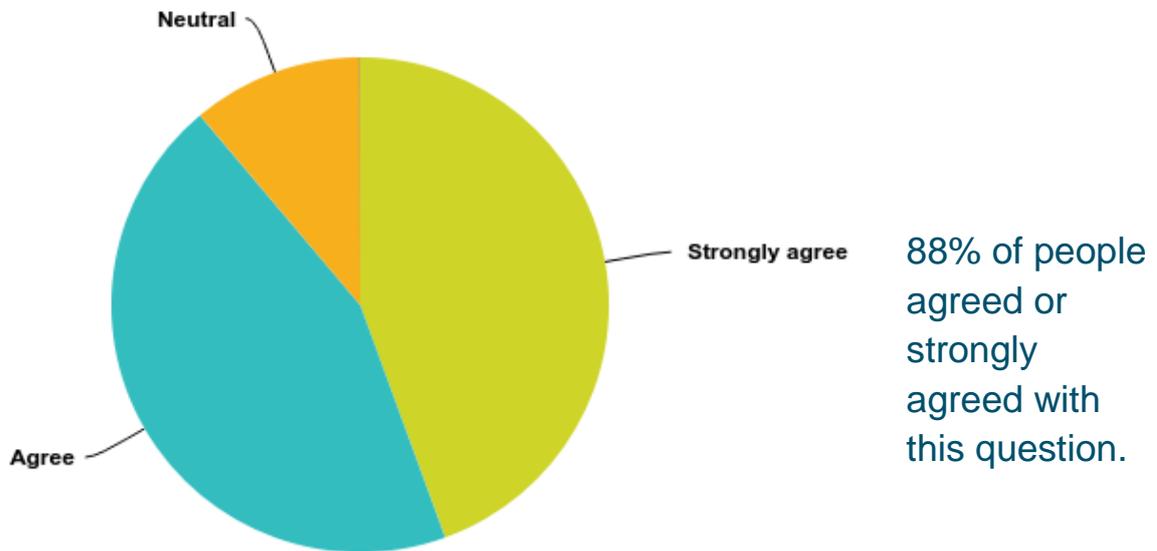
- “They fairly regularly leave early without completing everything on the task list”
- “Sometimes they work over the time allocated, generally they work the time agreed in the care plan”

Q15. I am kept informed by the care agency about any changes in care



Responses to this question were varied, with 27% of people saying they agreed, and 23% of people saying they disagreed.

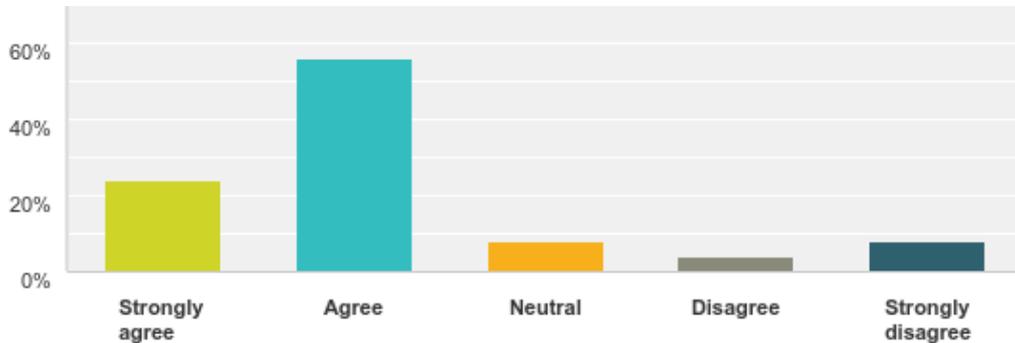
Q16. My care worker(s) treat me with dignity and respect



Comments included:

- “Personalities obviously vary but the care and patience and humour shown by all is impressive especially considering how hard they work, long hours for so little money. You think they would get tired and irritable but they never seem to get impatient, despite their working conditions and pay”
- “The carers I have do. Lack of respect is one of the main reasons I have refused to have certain workers. I have been treated as a child, including baby talk on numerous occasions and some of my carers have been very disrespectful to my home and belongings as well as me”

Q17. I am involved in planning the care I need

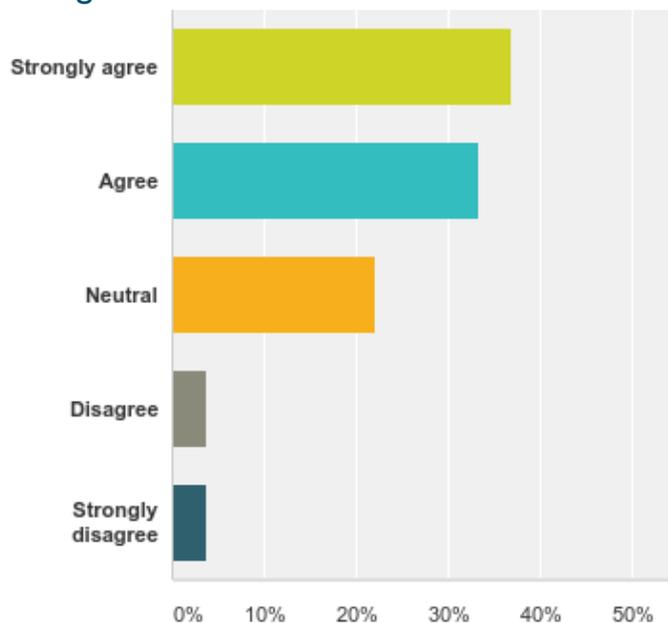


80% of people agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.

Comments included:

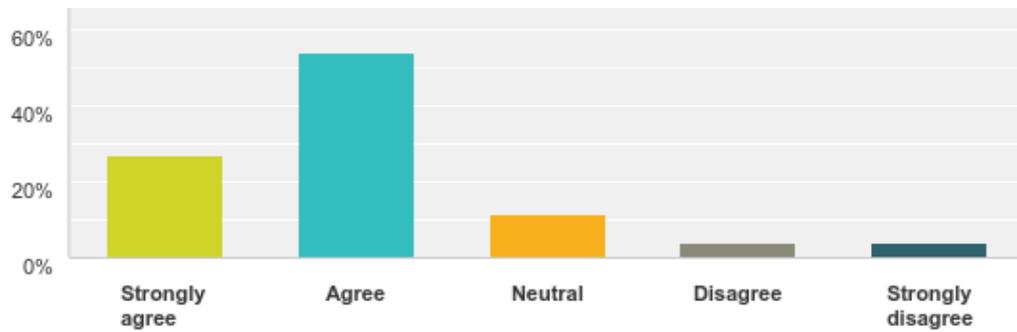
- “There is a team that comes to assess things and decide how much support I need and what for. I have no say”
- “I am involved in agreeing the plan”

Q18. I can involve other people that matter to me (e.g. family, friends) in planning the care I need



70% of people agreed or strongly agreed that they could involve other people that matter to them in planning the care they need.

Q19. My care worker(s) and home care agency understand what matters to me

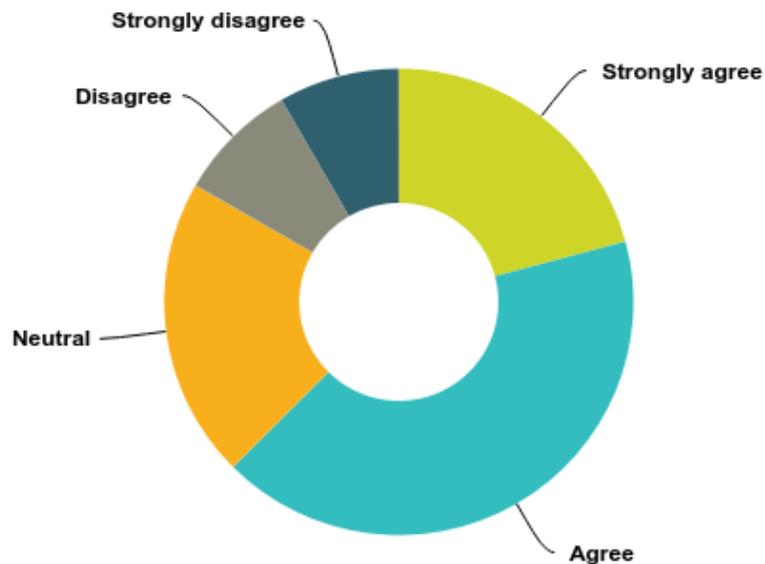


Over 50% of people said they agreed, with only 8% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.

Comments include:

- “They are responsive as far as possible”
- “Yes I think so”
- “Usually helpful”

Q20. The care agency is flexible when I want to make changes to my planned care

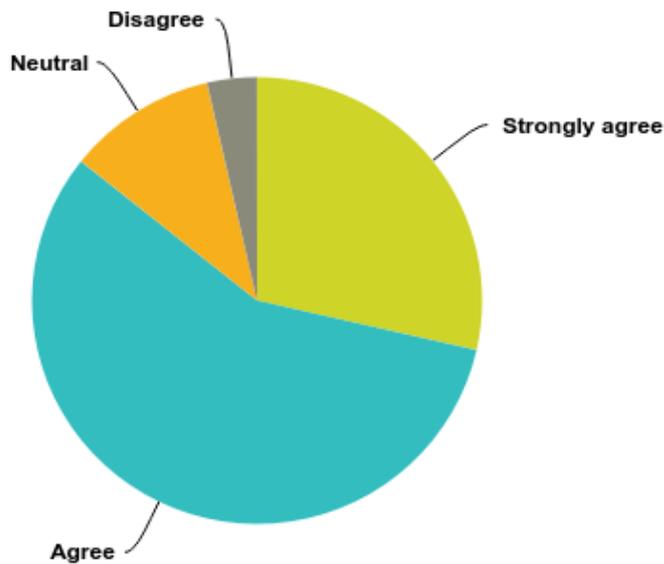


63% of people agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.

Comments included:

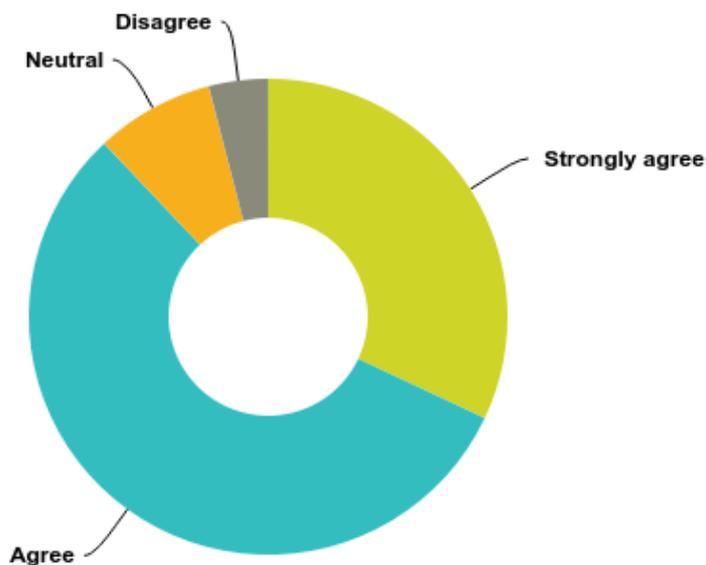
- “Changes are difficult, the agency does not have enough staff to make changes easily and react to changes in need”
- “The Agency is limited by numbers of carers available and the logistics of rostering at times of high demand but usually they are responsive and make attempt to be flexible to suit my needs”
- “I am required to give vast amounts of notice so they can plan support for my social hours but I get the care rota a week or so ahead making it very difficult for me to make plans. I have also had requests for support forgotten about or cancelled last minute despite me having had confirmation of them and made plans accordingly”

Q21. I am happy with the overall quality of my care



86% of people agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. 4% answered that they disagreed.

Q22. I am happy with the overall consistency of my care (e.g. I usually get the care I expect, from the care worker(s) I am used to)

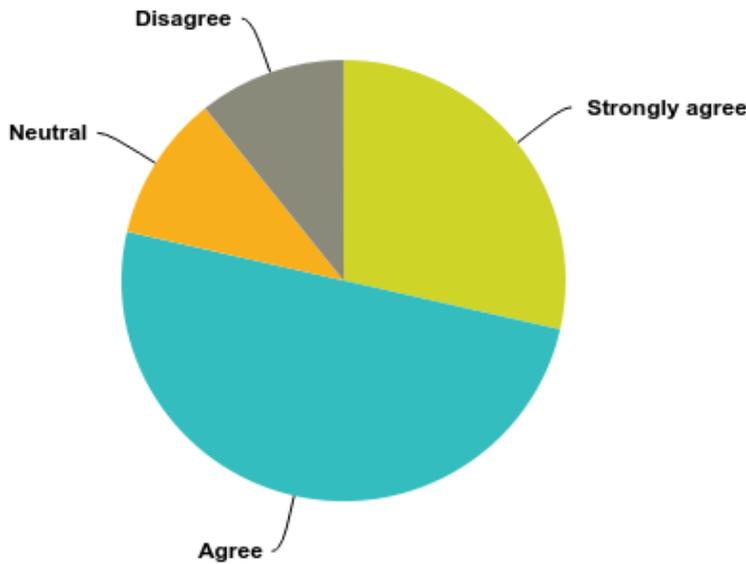


88% of people agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.

Comments included:

- “Obviously there are staff changes/turnover of people and emergencies but usually I get the good care I expect.”
- “I think they do a good job each time”

Q23. I have choice and control over my care



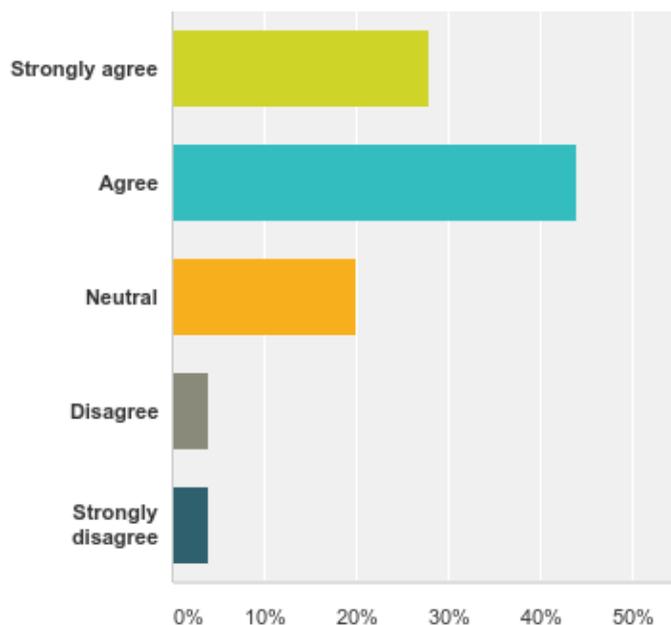
79% of people agreed or strongly agreed that they have choice and control over their care.

Comments included:

- “I cannot control the availability and rostering of workers but generally the agency tries to suit any needs.”
- “Some control but not as much as I would

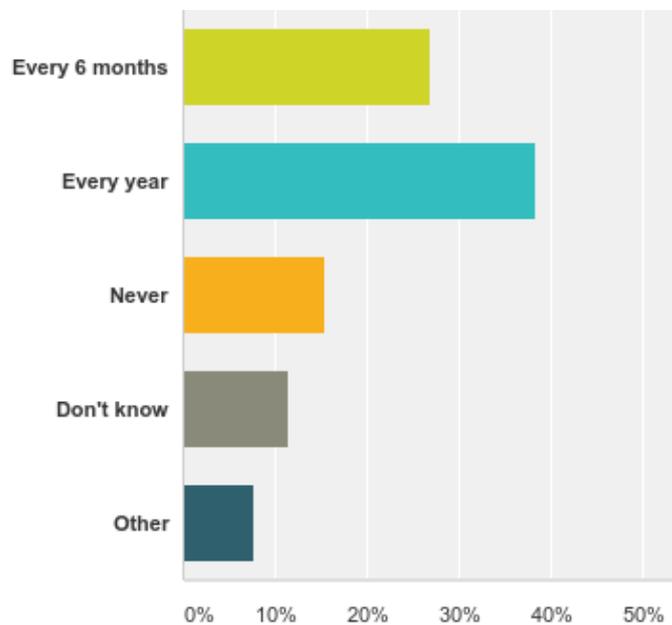
like”

Q24. I understand what personalisation is and what this means for me



72% of people agreed or strongly agreed that they understand what personalisation is and what this means for me.

Q25. How often does the care agency review the care you need with you?



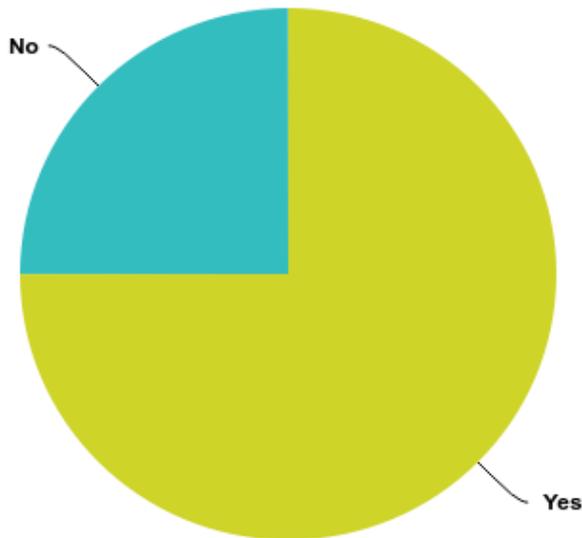
38% of people said they had a review of the care they need every year. 27% of people answered every 6 months.

Q26. Is there anything else that you would like to tell us (good or bad) about your experiences of home care?

Comments included:

- “The Care Agency should inform the client when/if there is a change, but this rarely happens.”
- “Would like more consistency, if my care worker is changed then I would like to be informed in advance”
- “The odd occasion I’m not happy but usually everything is fine”
- “Over the years our experience has been very mixed. The key problem is the level of skill and competence of staff; along with staffing levels and staff retention. The role of caring staff is not valued enough. This should be seen as a skilled role and paid accordingly to attract and keep good people.”
- “The carers are very good however the agency seems to be constantly putting more work on to their rotas which causes all sorts of problems for both parties”

Q27. Do you know who to contact if you are unhappy with the service or have any concerns?



75% said they did know who to contact. 25% said that they did not.

Q28. If yes, who would this be?

Comments included:

- “The carer”
- “social worker”
- “Agency”
- “Manager of the care team”
- “The care provider”
- “CQC”
- “Service provider and care manager”
- “The Agency Supervisor/The Council team”

Conclusion

Looking at the responses to our survey, it is clear to that many of those who took the survey are generally happy with their home care. 88% said they are treated with dignity and respect. 81% agreed or strongly agreed that their care worker or home care agency understood what matters to them. Most people said they were involved in planning the care they need, and can involve the people that they want to in this process too. The majority of the respondents reported that they were happy with the quality and consistency of their care.

It seems that one of the most important things for those receiving care is getting the right support rather than having the same care worker. However, people reported problems with consistency and continuity. Although having a number of different care workers does not seem to be a problem, changes to their care worker without notice can causes upset and concern.

There were mixed responses as to how well individuals were informed about their changes to their care. 63% agreed or strongly agreed that they could make changes to their planned care; however, the comments we received suggests that this can be varied, with some reporting this was very difficult for them to do.

Overall, there was generally a positive response to certain aspects of people's home care reported in the survey. We have never had any nominations for home care services or workers for our annual 'Making a Difference Awards', suggesting we need to do more to celebrate the work that home care workers and services are doing around the York area. There are, however, areas that need to be improved, and below we set out some recommendations we believe will help these areas.

Recommendations

Recommendation	Recommended to
Consider ways to improve communication regarding changes to care workers – inform individuals receiving care as far in advance as possible when there will be changes in care workers	City of York Council (CYC); Home Care providers; Care Quality Commission (CQC) Independent Care Group (ICG)
Consider ways to improve commitment from care workers/agencies to arrange and attend at times that suit the individual receiving home care	CYC Home Care Providers CQC ICG
Consider ways to improve the number of care workers arriving on time	CYC Home Care Providers CQC ICG
Better inform individual receiving home care about changes to their care	CYC Home Care Providers CQC ICG
Consider ways to improve continuity amongst care agencies in how easy it is for individuals to make changes to their planned care	CYC Home Care Providers CQC ICG
Make sure all individuals know what personalisation is and what it means for them and their care	CYC Home Care Providers CQC ICG
Consider re-running the survey in partnership with City of York Council at a mutually convenient time, to gain more insight into home care in York.	City of York Council; Healthwatch York

Feedback from relevant organisations

We have received feedback from the City of York Council regarding our survey results on home care services in York.

They commented on the useful feedback about the need for better communication regarding changes to care workers. They confirmed that they will discuss with providers in the near future. They also informed us about how they are looking to revise their approach on times as a part of a move to outcomes focused approach and to facilitate flexibility and improved capacity across the sector. This will involve a move away from set times unless circumstances mean a set time is needed, for example the giving of medication at a specific time. They have said that they are “proposing that a band of time be allocated for a call and that the care agency and customer then agree what the most suitable times area as opposed to the prescriptive approach used at times now by social workers.” Currently the situation is that there is as 30 minute threshold for home care workers to arrive by, but that providers should notify service users if their carer is running late. We look forward to hearing how the changes the City of York Council are looking to make will affect service users in the future.

In response to recommendation 7, they said:

“City of York Council already conduct a very similar survey on a bi-annual basis; moving to annual where the views of a minimum of 25% of home care service users (around 200-225 people) are sought. This is used to assess quality across all providers on an individual and service wide level. The survey has been in place for several years and is integral to how City of York Council monitors home care services. Individual results are shared with providers and used as part of the monitoring cycle of services they provide. The last survey was undertaken in 2016/17and City of York Council consulted with 379 customers/carers to produce the report (168 customers and 211 carers).

This is felt to be a more comprehensive sample of views in comparison to the 31 respondents to Healthwatch York’s survey.”

Appendices

Appendix 1 -. Comments from the Healthwatch York Issues Log between September 2015 and August 2017

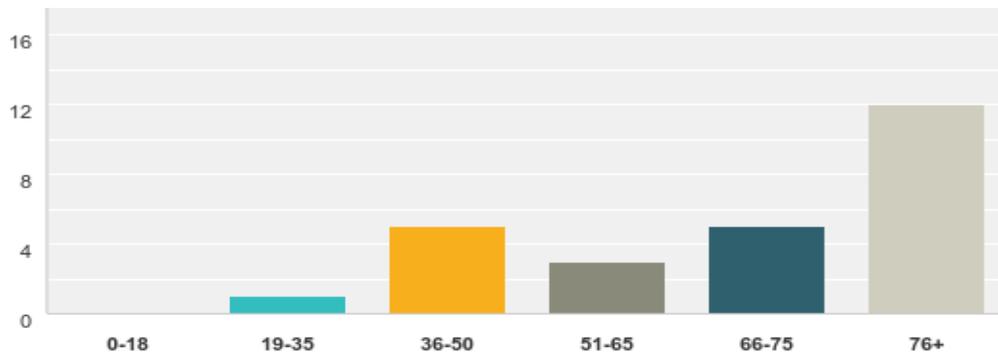
- People are refusing care packages as they do not want to pay for half hour visits where they believe that 15 minutes will do. An individual was offered a package but rejected it as they only offered half hour visits not 15 minute ones. Their family was unhappy as their relative would not tolerate someone in the house longer than needed to provide medication, and that would cost double what is required
- A person with MS had to be admitted to hospital with pressure sores due to poor care from home care workers. They also developed a urinary infection due to incorrect care of their catheter
- A family contacted CYC Adult Social care in September regarding care for an 83 year old individual. The individual had a care assessment but then there was no communication from CYC unless initiated by the person's daughter. The individual was being cared for by their granddaughter, who was due to give birth at the end of November and there are no other family members able to provide care due to other health issues. The family were informed that a care package would be in place within a week, but shortly after were told that this would not be happening, and that a care home was the only option. The family challenged this, and after a series of events, carers were found. The family felt that they had not been treated well by Adult Social Services, said that the social worker's attitude was very poor, and that communication had been very bad. The family were concerned that this might happen to other people who don't have a family willing to fight their cause.
- Visit to an individual living independently. Found 3 pills in a glass dish, but the person stated they had taken all medication they had been offered. A care worker was there so they were asked. They said they didn't know anything about it. The visitor waited until the next carer came, and pointed the tablets out; the carer took the pills away to dispose of. The visitor raises this only because they are concerned how long they had been there, why they hadn't

been noticed before, and what the effect would be of accidentally taking too many tablets

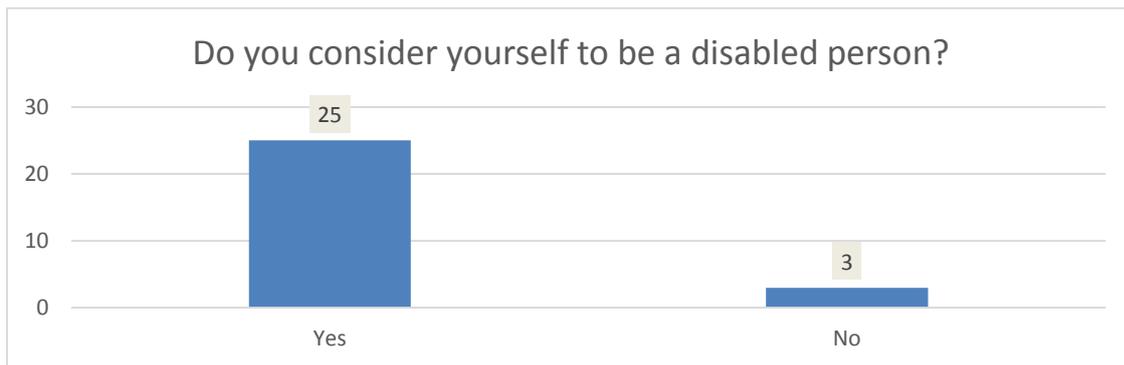
- An individual who is full time carer for their spouse, needs carer for half a day per week to give them respite (self-funded). Checked with Crossroads Care, they will accept the referral

Appendix 2 – Monitoring Information

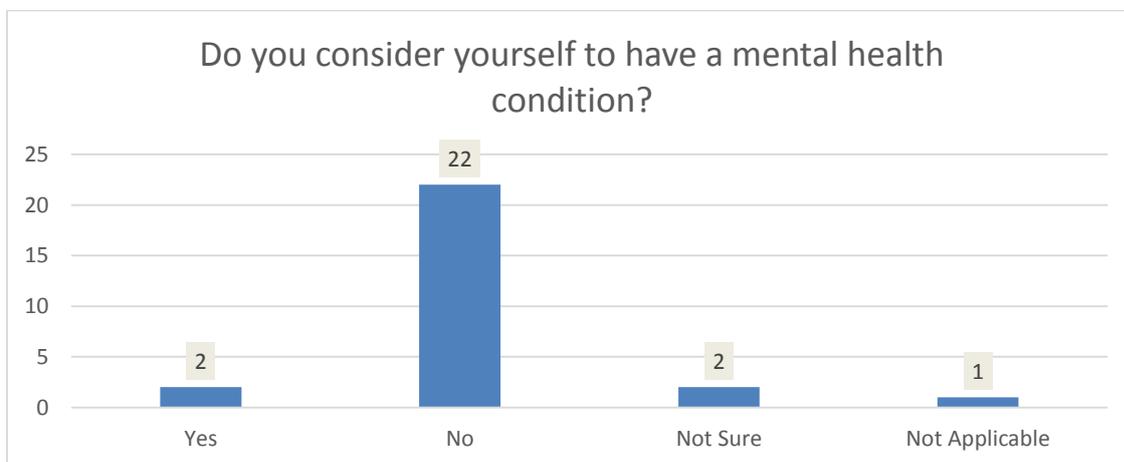
Please tell us your age



Do you consider yourself to be a disabled person?



Do you consider yourself to have a mental health condition?



Contact us:

Post: Freepost RTEG-BLES-RRYJ
Healthwatch York
15 Priory Street
York YO1 6ET

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York CVS

Healthwatch York is a project at York CVS. York CVS works with voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations in York. York CVS aims to help these groups do their best for their communities, and people who take part in their activities or use their services.

This report

This report is available to download from the Healthwatch York website: www.healthwatchyork.co.uk

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