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- Overall, 76% of people are happy or very happy with the care they receive in their own home.
 - 93% of people felt they were treated with dignity and respect

97% of people had compliments for their carer's manner when they were with them.

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Introduction

Healthwatch Wakefield is an independent organisation that gives local people a voice about their experiences of health and care services. We listen and bring this information together to recommend ways of improving services to the people who plan, buy and deliver them.

The purpose of this home care survey was to find out what people's views and experiences are of the care they receive in their own homes; and to engage with users of home care services and their carers, friends and family in order to strengthen their voice and enable them to play a more active part in how domiciliary services are delivered and designed in the future.

Methodology

In January to March 2016 Healthwatch Wakefield with the help of Wakefield and District Housing (WDH) carried out a survey to find out about local people's experiences of home care. The choice was made to work with WDH for two reasons, firstly because they were able to support us to locate people receiving domiciliary care services and facilitate survey distribution, and secondly because WDH had indicated an interest in looking into whether alternative, more flexible and responsive models of home care provision were possible.

The survey was designed by Healthwatch Wakefield using similar surveys conducted in other areas, for example Healthwatch Bradford. It was then circulated and adapted following discussions with WDH and Wakefield Council commissioners of home care services.

The survey was distributed to people living in WDH homes who were known to be receiving domiciliary care services, including people living within independent living scheme settings. Assistance was provided by WDH Support Workers to those residents who wanted help in completing the survey. Care was taken to ensure that the respondents living within independent living schemes gave their survey responses in relation to externally provided care support, not the support provided by WDH staff.

Home Care providers were informed by letter of our intention to conduct the survey and were invited to provide their own perspective.

At a similar time as the home care survey, Healthwatch Wakefield worked on an independent evaluation of carers' experience of the impact of Connecting Care in Wakefield, based on 53 one to one interviews with unpaid carers. The evaluation forms part of a wider independent evaluation of Connecting Care, formerly known as Care Closer to Home, being conducted by Niche Health and Social Care Consulting and supported by Healthwatch Wakefield.

Some of the findings in this report were related to people's experiences of home care provision and we have therefore included the summary on page 13.

Points to consider

There are many reasons why surveys can be unreliable mechanisms in finding out experiences of health and social care. We were particularly aware of this concern when conducting a survey of vulnerable people receiving personal care in their own home. It should be noted that the tendency to response bias in this situation could be quite high, as people are extremely reliant on the care provided and are therefore possibly less likely to be completely honest.

The home care sector is acknowledged to be under strain across the country, with high turnover of staff and the difficult geographical model of delivery make it a challenging business to run. In addition, the significant needs of some individuals receiving care mean that it is not possible, for example, to provide consistent care workers because they require up to four visits per day. This means that the indicators of quality that we would normally be looking for are therefore not achievable in some circumstances.

Who filled in the survey?

Total Responses 121

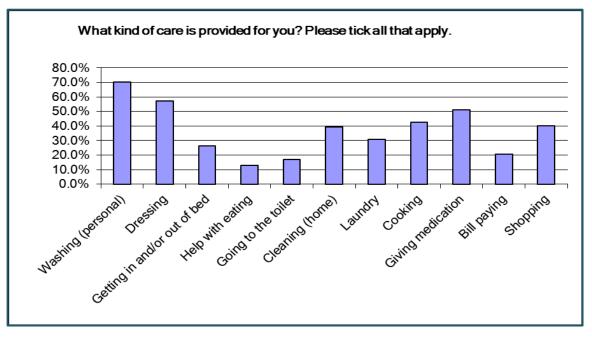
The respondents were mostly over 65, with 34% being over 86.

68% were female.

Mostly white British.

35% of surveys were filled in by the person receiving care, the rest were filled in by a combination of relatives, carers and Wakefield District Housing staff in independent living scheme settings.

People reported receiving various types of care, as follows.



Which agencies were providing the care?

37 different agencies were identified; the most frequently mentioned were Croft Care (19), Springfields Home Care (12) and Mears (9). Only 11 people did not identify their care agency.

Wakefield District Council calculates that approximately 60% of the mentioned providers are either:

- Commissioned by the council under the home care framework.
- Commissioned by the council under other service frameworks.
- Provided by in house services.

The Wakefield Council response to this report can be found on page 15.

Summary findings

Overall, the survey shows a relatively high level of satisfaction with home care provision. There are some key themes for improvement from the survey which have been incorporated into the recommendations on page 14.

One of the simplest themes for care agencies to address is communication, with people feeling that care agencies could do better at keeping them informed of changes to care. Lack of time spent, late arrivals, lack of appropriate training, and consistency of care workers were also mentioned as having room for improvement. Although it is very difficult for agencies to provide consistent care workers, it was noted to be particularly vital for people suffering with dementia who can find it bewildering and frightening to have strangers arrive in their home to provide personal care.

Most people had good things to say about their care workers and were pleased and grateful for the support they provide. Some key suggestions for improvement include that care workers should take enough time to read the care plans provided and talk to people both service users and relatives, especially if it is their first visit.

As well as the more detailed recommendations to address key issues, we note that there were themes in relation to social isolation and mental health. Healthwatch is aware of schemes within the district to address these issues, for example social prescribing and community anchor initiatives. It would be beneficial to be able to link people receiving home care to these initiatives and others, if possible.

It was also identified that people found it difficult to choose a care provider and to change provider if necessary. Although the findings of this particular survey have been mainly positive, we are aware that sometimes care providers are less than satisfactory and it is very difficult for a lay person to find out about quality. A brief mystery shopper search on the CQC website for 'home care Wakefield' gives 33,587 results¹, and although information is provided by the council about home care services², there is no way of finding out about people's experiences of care provided, particularly for services not contracted by the council.

Survey responses

The survey was designed in three sections:

- The care you receive and how it is planned;
- How you feel about the care you receive;
- Is there anything that could be done better?

The survey questions are appended at the end of this report.

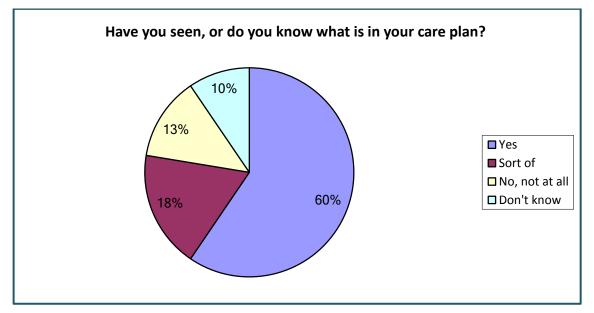
¹

http://www.cqc.org.uk/search/site/home%20care%20wakefield?location=&latitude=&longitude=&sort=default &la=&distance=15&mode=html

² http://www.wakefield.gov.uk/residents/health-care-and-advice/adults-and-older-people-services/living-at-home/homecare-services

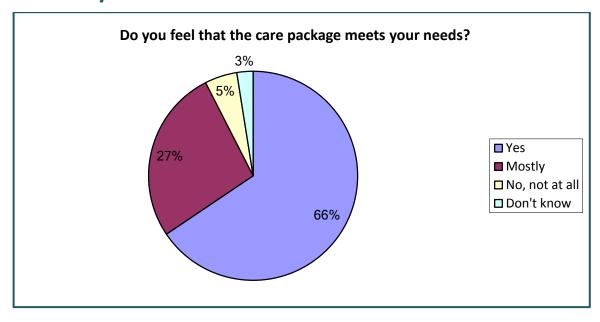
Section One - The care you receive and how it is planned

Most people (78%) had seen or knew what was in their care plan, but 22% of people either hadn't seen it or didn't know if they had.



74% of people said they were or sometimes were involved in the planning of their care. 12% said no, and 14% said they didn't know.

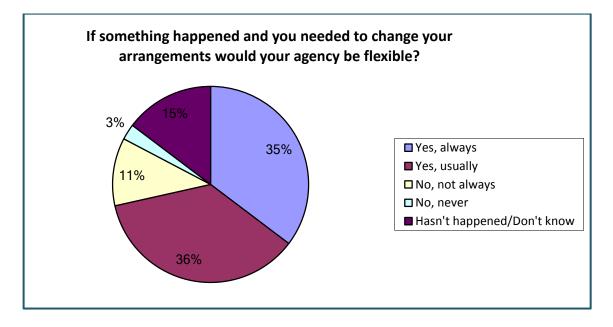
93% said they felt their care package met their needs either fully or mostly.



75% said the care worker always or usually had enough time to provide their care, which means a quarter of people felt they weren't given enough time.

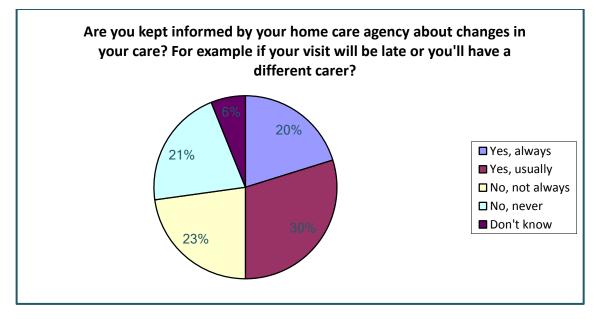
"There are often more tasks than time so they have to be prioritised."

Most people said their care agency was flexible if they needed to change their arrangements, with only 3% saying their agency was never flexible.



However, only half the number of people surveyed said they were always or usually informed about changes in their care, while 21% said they were never informed about changes.

"Better communication between the Agency office staff and the carers. When I ring office they say they will ring me back and they never do."

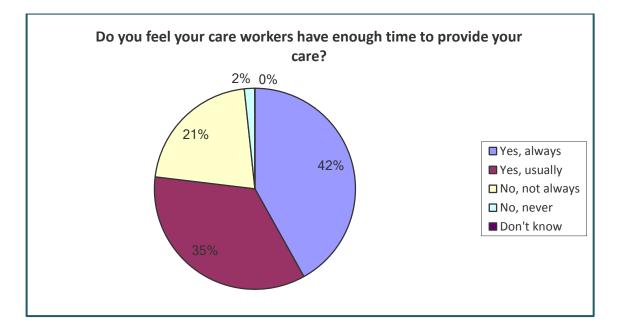


"If they cannot come they should be allowed to let me know."

61% of people said their care worker always or usually arrived on time, six (5%) people said they never arrived on time.

"Doing a good job but would like carers to come at the time stated and not early or late."

77% said that their care workers had enough to time do what was needed.



Most people had a number to contact both during (83%) and out of (73%) office hours in case of a problem.

Overall, 76% of people are happy or very happy with the care they receive in their own home.

Section Two - How you feel about the care you receive

90% of people said their care workers do what they think they're supposed to do.

"Support worker is always jolly and polite but goes against my wishes on occasion though usually it is in my best personal interest to do so. Personal care workers are polite and considerate."

New or substitute carers were said to be more problematic and there were a few comments in relation to carers not reading the care plan or not performing their tasks adequately.

"They do not read care plan especially new carers. Do not use a common sense approach which supervisors inform us they are supposed to."

"This depends on the carer; some do a lot more than others. We pay for 1/2 hour on a morning and no-one stays the full 1/2 hour.

"I was left with no incontinence pad filled at night. Pressure reducing pads not always in place properly, some creams not applied correctly. Most carers know basic care but not personal care that can only be learned by continuity and regular care by the same people."

"One carer will give me jam and bread for my breakfast. I do not like this carer. The other will give me beans on toast or eggs or ask me what I want."

"Regular care workers are very good and follow the care plan. Problems arise when other care workers cover for holidays and illness, can be 6 different carers in one day. Despite been given a narrative of the care plan, this is not always read, followed and quite often incorrect. There is also a care plan in the flat and visual aids on the kitchen cupboards/memo board, this is also ignored. Examples of issues include: incorrect details of medication provided, bed clothes left dirty and trailing on the floor, kitchen window and flat door left open all night, carers leaving taps running and clothes on bathroom floor, juice poured neat into cup which required diluting, commode not cleaned probably or disinfected, soiled laundry placed with clean laundry despite a separate bucket been provided, breakfast tray left on lap until next care visit. The support team provide the carers with the care narrative, the times of the visits are not always as stipulated on the care plan and the medication details are not always accurate. Recently, they forgot to arrange a teatime and bedtime visit. If I had not visited mum that day, she would not have been given her tea and she would have been sat in her chair all night as no one was down to visit her. The last visit of the day is to put her to bed and make sure she has a drink, 25 minutes is allocated. On 14/01/2016, Mum was already in bed upon the carer's arrival; they made a drink and just left it at the side of bed without waking her. This resulted in her waking up in the middle of the night dehydrated and confused. My mum is blind and in her late eighties, she would not see the drink left at the side of the bed. The carer was there 10 minutes."

93% of people felt they were treated with dignity and respect

"Kind and considerate and understand my needs very helpful and professional."

Seven people said no or don't know to this question. One person said they were never treated with dignity and respect; the person didn't say which care agency provided her care and indicated an overall dissatisfaction with the service she received; and also said that her care worker was leaving.

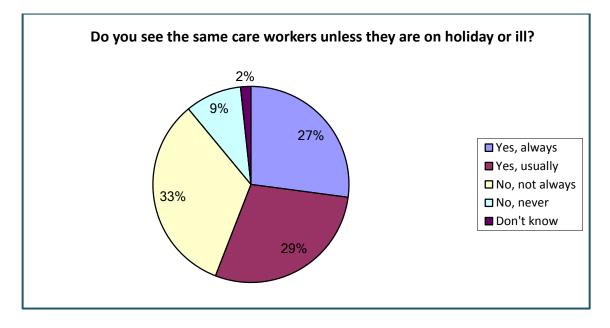
86% of people felt listened to and understood by their care worker.

"They are nice and friendly and I can have a laugh with them. They cheer me up when they come and go the extra mile to help me."

81% of people who had a particular health condition, such as diabetes or Parkinson's, felt that their care worker understood their condition, but 19% said no, or weren't sure if they did.

Most people felt that their specific needs were taken into account in relation to who provided their care, e.g. whether it was a man or a woman, and whether they had any cultural or religious needs.

Just over half of people responding said that under normal circumstances they usually or always saw the same care worker.



We assumed that people who have numerous visits during the week would probably report that they didn't see the same carers; however there didn't seem to be any clear correlation in the findings. People who had 7 or 21 visits per week reported mostly that they always or usually saw the same carer, but for 14 or 28 visits per week, they mostly said they didn't.

Visits per week	No, never/ not always	Yes, always/ usually	No answer/ don't know
7	35%	65%	0
14	69%	25%	6%
21	20%	70%	10%
28	63%	37%	0

"Have lots of new carers. When this happens they don't know what to do. But when regular ones come no problems. Wish there were more regular ones but this is not always what happens. More new ones coming than regular ones."

Within this statistic, we found that 72% of people who always see the same carer told us that they are very happy with their care. This compares with 18% of people who don't always see the same carer who say are very happy with their care.

94% of people whose care workers had to operate equipment in their home felt that they were competent at doing so.

97% of people had compliments for their carer's manner when they were with them.

"Professional, friendly and cheerful."

"Respectful, caring, helpful."

"Perfect manner if I have any problems with my carers they are usually sorted out quickly we have a good understanding of each other."

"All carers are friendly, pleasant, talkative, obliging towards me."

Some of the comments were more mixed:

- "Odd ones are caring. Others have a non caring approach. Not many seem to have adequate training before being sent out to us the patients."
- "Their manner is usually good, but I don't get continuity so sometimes I feel like I am a dummy, there are also some nice friendly carers but they do not understand my condition."
- "Some of the carers will talk to you, but there's one that never talks."
- "I see a lot of different people, some are ok others not."

Section Three - Is there anything that could be done better

As well as the questions about the care they currently receive, we asked about whether people thought that the service could be improved, or if there was anything else that could be done to make their lives better. These were qualitative questions.

Thinking about the care you get, are there any ways you think it could be improved?

The majority of the 84 comments in this section stated that they were perfectly happy with the care they receive and did not have any suggestions for improvements.

"The care I get is very good. I have no complaints."

"The care I receive is always taken seriously by all employees."

Areas for improvement included suggestions such as continuity of regular carers, although there was a realisation that this is often difficult to achieve for practical reasons.

"Very little could be done except in consistency. Given the number of time the carers attend it is difficult to have the same carers all the time given sickness and holidays."

"Consistent continuity of care so that I can build up trust and the carers can get to know me and my condition. Better communication between me, carers and the care company."

"Need regular carers that know what to do, then there will be no stress wondering who's going to turn up. Especially morning and last thing at night.

"Continuity of care, too many different carers as my mother has dementia and this confuses her more."

Comments stated that communication with the care agency was often seen as unsatisfactory, which reflects the findings that only 50% of people felt their care agency kept them informed of changes.

"Better communication between the Agency office staff and the carers. When I ring office they say they will ring me back and they never do."

"Should be made aware if carers are going to be late. Would prefer same carer."

There were also comments that referenced timekeeping concerns, both the late arrival of care workers and their ability to stay long enough to achieve their tasks.

"Time keeping - sticking to times they should come instead of fitting me in. They come at different times."

Although the majority of respondents thought that their care plan was followed, there were some examples where this was not the case, and suggestions for improvement included more awareness from care workers about the importance of the care plan.

"By conversing and asking meaningful conversations. Reading care plan and notices placed around flat. By not following care plan do not appreciate level of risk placing client in."

Is there anything you can think of that would make you feel more happy or contented than you are now?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Help to get me out and about	59%	29
More social contact with family and friends	16%	8
Have things to do like hobbies or activities	31%	15
Being able to know more about what I can go and do - more information on what activities are on in my area	29%	14
Someone to visit me to help me feel less isolated	41%	20

Anything else that would make you feel more happy and contented?

Comments included:

"To provide a service as part of care package then would reduce my isolation and improve my mental healthcare providers should not focus on purely practical tasks, that is dressing, as my mental health is equally important to a quality of life."

"I like to go out and about and feel if this was available I would make use of it."

"Better educational facilities available to me. Most are on an evening when I have no care."

"Going on holiday, Skegness Richmond Park. Day out at Brid/Skegness. Shopping for clothes, horse riding disabled school, carer-companion to go places with."

"I would like to go out more but need a carer to assist me in doing that."

"Better health! I am incontinent, this makes me self-conscious and less likely to go out. I would like to be able to attend events but I am in pain in my wheelchair and no-one is insured to take me across to the centre. I would like to get out but my health prevents me."

As part of the final analysis, we put together all the comments from the survey and looked for consistent themes or messages from these.

Themes from comments	Number of comments
Poor communication generally with the care agency, including being told when new carer coming, or back up plans generally	23
Preference for regular carers expressed	19
For carers/agencies to be aware of other health needs not just physical, support to do things that would improve quality of life	12
Carers don't always arrive when they should	11
Carers don't always do what's required - don't follow instructions	7
Carers don't always read care plan	7
More time allowed for carers to do their job	5

Findings from "Carers' Experiences of Connecting Care" report – June 2016

Helping and supporting carers is a key aim of the Connecting Care approach specifically the aim of:

• Carers being supported and prepared to care for longer.

We were therefore asked to carry out interviews with unpaid carers of people who have received services from Connecting Care staff in order to answer the following question:

• What is the impact of Connecting Care on the quality and experience of services for both patients and their carers, in the opinion of carers of people directly receiving services as patients?

The full report can be found on the Healthwatch Wakefield website, but one of the key messages from interviews with unpaid carers was their experiences of paid care companies. In particular, from a carers' point of view the difficulties they experienced in making an informed decision about a care company at the outset, and then dealing with poor performance once they were appointed.

What can we do about poor service from care companies?

It would be disingenuous not to discuss the implications of what carers told us of their experiences with paid carers. Although this service is not provided by Connecting Care staff they have often been involved in commissioning it and/or signposting to it. Whilst these services had been enormously supportive for many carers and patients/service users, they had also caused some significant problems due to the poor or erratic quality of the care provided. We met a number of carers who had had to change the care company that they used several times (one person had used four different companies) before finding one which was reliable. The same was true of residential respite care. The carers that we met had little experience of day centre care and so we are unable to comment on the quality of this service.

This is not an easy issue to address, but it is certainly the case that many carers could have benefitted from some support to help them deal with the issues that they had with these companies, as it was a source of great stress to them. One carer did tell us that Carers Wakefield had been able to help her write a letter of complaint and to change care companies, so it might be that, providing Carers Wakefield support to more carers could also help them with this issue.

The wider issue of the poor quality of care provided by some of these companies is one which Healthwatch Wakefield will continue to monitor and pursue.

Recommendations

For commissioners of home care services

 We recommend that commissioners place service user experience at the centre and foreground of the review and development of home care services, with particular reference to the points mentioned below.

For commissioners and providers of health and care services

- 1) We recommend that consideration be given to ways of addressing the social isolation and mental health needs of people receiving care, alongside their physical needs. This might be sharing information about social prescribing schemes and/or voluntary sector support.
- 2) We recommend that consideration is given to some method of allowing the public to find out information about the quality of care agency provision.
- 3) We recommend that consideration be given to signposting or providing information and advice to people who wish to complain or change care agency.

For care agencies

- 1) We recommend that care agencies prioritise communication with their clients, eg make sure people are made aware when there are going to be changes to care, or delays in arrivals.
- 2) We recommend that care agencies provide the same carers as far as possible, particularly for people with dementia who find it confusing and frightening to deal with strangers.
- 3) We recommend that care agencies have schedules and robust 'log in log out' systems that allow carers to arrive on time for their appointments and stay as long as required.
- 4) We recommend that if a carer is providing care for someone with a particular health condition, sufficient training should be provided to ensure they understand the implications of their condition.
- 5) We recommend that care agencies ensure that carers are given time to review care plans with people to ensure that both parties know where it is and that the care plan is being followed.

For care staff

- 1) We recommend that care staff follow care plans and other instructions, especially when visiting a new client.
- 2) We recommend that care staff make time to have conversations with the person being cared for and their relatives to ensure they understand their situation as much as possible.

Wakefield Council response

Healthwatch has been pleased to be able to work with home care commissioners at the Council to ensure that this report is useful and relevant.

"The council values the views and experiences of people who use services. The findings of the Healthwatch report chimes with the Council's feedback from service users in that whilst most people report a high level of satisfaction with homecare services the predominant area for improvement relates to late calls or calls not lasting the planned duration. It is the Council's belief that the major contributor to these issues is carer capacity. To respond to this the council has for a number of years established a "fair rate" for care calculated at a level to ensure that providers can better compete within the local employment market and thereby increase the retention of quality care staff. The Council have also implemented a separate payment for travel time for each care package in recognition of the downtime experienced by individual workers in delivering the service. This "fair rate" approach has enabled the Council to break out of the cycle of providers tendering unsustainably low rates to win business.

The Council has required providers to implement electronic call monitoring technology as a vital component in the provision of a quality service alerting them to late calls enabling alternative provision or arrangements to be made available to vulnerable people.

The Council's commissioning arrangements for the home care service seek to achieve the following outcomes, which are included in the specification for the service:

- To promote individuals' well-being and quality of life by meeting their emotional, social and physical needs
- To promote individuals' independence by delaying and/or reducing the need for on-going care and support
- To treat individuals in a dignified manner and empower them by promoting choice and control
- To protect individuals from harm

In order to support these outcomes, service providers are required to implement the following:

- Effective training and development plans.
- Individual records for staff including training, appraisal and supervision.
- The existence and availability of policies and procedures.
- Audits; complaints and compliments; investigation and inspection reports
- Maximise continuity of care and support as far as reasonably practicable
- Provide care and support in accordance with the times agreed with the Service User as far as reasonably practicable.
- Records of recruitment and selection in accordance with the specific contract clauses."

Healthwatch Wakefield Home Care Survey Questions

HOME CARE SURVEY				
We are asking you for your help in completing this survey because you receive care in your home.				
Section One – This section is abo	out what care you red	ceive and how it	: is planned	
1. Are you filling in this for	m for yourself or son	neone else?		
O Yourself	Someone else	2		
If you are filling in this form for s	omeone else, what is	your relationsh	ip to the person r	eceiving care?
2. What kind of care is pro-	vided for you?			
U Washing (personal)			Getting in ar	nd/or out of bed
Help with eating	Going to the	toilet	Cleaning (ho	me)
Laundry	Cooking		Giving media	cation
Bill paying	□ Shopping			
3. How often do your care	workers visit? (e.g. 3	0 minutes, 4 tin	nes a week)	
4. Have you seen, or do yo	u know what is in yo	ur care plan?		
U Yes U So	ort of	U No, not at	all	Don't know
5. Has your home care pro	vider involved you in	the planning of	f your care?	
Yes N	D	Sometime	s 🗌	Don't know
6. Do you feel that the care	e package meets you	r needs?		
□ _{Yes} □ _N	ostly	No, not at	all	Don't know
7. If something happened and you needed to change your arrangements would your agency be flexible?				
Yes, always yes, usual	y No, not always	🗋 No, neve	er 🛛 Hasn't know	t happened/ Don't
8. Are you kept informed by your home care agency about changes in your care? For example your visit will be late or you'll have a different carer?				
Yes, always	ially 🗌 No, n	ot always	No, never	Don't know
9. Do your care workers ar	rive on time?			
Yes, always	ually 🗌 No, n	ot always) _{No, never}	Don't know
10. Do you feel your care we	orkers have enough t	ime to provide	your care?	
Yes, always	ually 🗌 No, n	ot always) _{No, never}	🗆 Don't know

11. If you had a problem, do you know how to contact the home care agency?

During Office Hours:			
└ Yes, I have a name └ Yes, I have but only a └ No, I do not have └ Don't know			
and number number contact details			
Out of Office Hours:			
Yes, I have a name Yes, I have but only a No, I do not have Don't know			
and number number contact details			
Section Two – This section is about how you feel about the care you receive			
12. Do your care workers do what you think they're supposed to do?			
Yes, always Yes, usually No, not always No, never Onn't know			
If you would like to tell us more about this please let us know here.			
13. Do you feel like you are treated with dignity and respect?			
Yes, always Yes, usually No, not always No, never Don't know			
14. Do you feel listened to and understood by your care workers?			
Yes, always Yes, usually No, not always No, never Don't know			
15. If you have a particular health condition like diabetes, or Parkinson's, or something else, do you feel that your care workers understand this?			
Yes Yes, a little No, not at all Don't know			
16. If you prefer to have a woman or a man providing your care, is this taken into account?			
Yes No Not applicable Don't know			
17. If you have any cultural or religious needs, do you feel that these are understood?			
Yes, always Yes, usually No, not always No, never			
Don't know I don't have any of these specific needs			
18. Do you always see the same care workers unless they are on holiday or ill?			
Yes, always Yes, usually No, not always No, never Onn't know			
19. Do you feel your care workers are competent when operating the equipment in your home? (For example hoist, electric bed, wheelchairs, medication safe, cooker/microwave)			
Yes No Not applicable			
20. How do you find your carer's manner when they are with you?			
Please let us know what you think here.			
Section Three – Is there anything that could be done better?			

21. Thinking about the care that you get, are there any ways you think it could be improved?

Please let us know what you think here.

22. Overall, how satisfied are you with the care provided by the home care agency?

Very happy	Quite happy	It is just OK
Quite unhappy	Very unhappy	Sometimes good
Sometimes bad	Don't know	

23. Is there anything you can think of that would make you feel more happy, or contented than you are right now?

Help to get me out and about
More social contact with family and friends
Have things to do like hobbies or activities
Being able to know more about what I can go and do – more information on what activities are on in my
area
Someone to visit me to help me feel less isolated

Have you any other suggestions or ideas on things that would make you feel more happy or contented?

Please let us know what you think here.

Which Agency provides you with Home Care Services? Please state in box below.

Thank you very much for completing this survey, it helps to make services better.

Contact us

Get in touch



Company No. 099047848 Registered in England and Registered Charity No. 1166797