



Domiciliary Care Survey results

July - August 2016

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Introduction

Domiciliary Care, also known as Home Care, are services provided by a home care agency that support people who require care to live at home in the way that they want to. Domiciliary Care services are provided by different care agencies across Central Bedfordshire, some of which is funded by Central Bedfordshire Council

Central Bedfordshire Council is working to improve the standard of care they commission from care providers. The Council do this by clearly setting out specified services in the contracts they give to care providers.

Background

Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire was invited by the Contracts and Commissioning Team (Adult Social Care) at Central Bedfordshire Council to design a confidential postal questionnaire for the users of council purchased Domiciliary Care services. The Council wanted to give local residents, who currently use these services, the opportunity to shape the way in which they are provided in the future.

The outcome of the survey is to be used to inform the Council's procurement processes for Domiciliary Care providers to the Council and local residents.

A representative sample (20%) of current users of the Domiciliary Care Service was used for the survey. A total of 324 questionnaires were posted of which 84 surveys were completed and returned (26%).

Methodology

Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire, in discussion with local commissioners, developed 19 questions based on hypotheses utilising common conceptions of delivery issues regarding home care.

The questions were designed to test these hypotheses and identify user expectations and satisfactions / dissatisfactions as far as possible within the remit of a postal survey. For example questions 4 and 5 looked at the hypotheses that carers did not arrive on time nor stayed for the length of time that was outlined in their care plan.

The language and format was tested prior to conducting the survey by a user panel comprised of volunteers, Domiciliary Care service users and carers. The panel advised on small changes to the original format.

The nature of such a survey applied to a cohort of vulnerable people would always be affected with significant limitations. The sample of current service users who received the survey was therefore also offered the opportunity, in a covering letter, to receive face to face help in completing the survey. However, the take up of this facility was low; 1.5% of respondents.

A number of returns (2%) identified that the questionnaire was completed by someone other than the service user themselves. There were also three returns that were completed as though by the service user but all appeared to have identical handwriting, as all three of these returns reported extremely favourably on the performance of the home carer. The concern would be that these had been completed by the home carer, with or without reference to the service user. Due to the size of the sample this concern needs to be aired however these returns were included in the survey results.

The only way to eliminate such carer bias with this respondent group would be to survey through confidential face to face interviews with the service users.

Analysis of surveys returned

In **Question 1**, service users were asked if they were involved in the development of their care plan. The response indicates that 40% of people did not feel fully involved in the planning of their care.

The use of terms such as 'to a large degree' was to enable people some subjectivity in terms of response, which we hoped would allow for recall variations i.e., capture the overall impression the individual retained of their involvement in the care planning activity.

Of the responses to question 1, 59% of respondents felt that they had played a significant role in the planning of their care with 5% saying that they were not at all involved with the planning of their care. There was a very rough correlation between this answer and the next as in Question 2 people were asked if their needs were being met by the care provider.

Again the terminology used in Question 2 was designed to gauge an overall consumer impression. Because of the nature of the survey we were not able to probe the answers and therefore there may be confused elements in play, e.g. people may answer 'completely' because they are routinely receiving regular care, and not because the needs identified in the care plan are being met. Equally a 'partly' response could be because individuals feel the needs in the care plan are not matched to their levels of experienced need.

In Question 2 none of the respondents answered 'no' to this question however quite a high number of people still provided comments. As would be expected when 73% of people reported that they felt their needs were being 'completely' met there were positive comments. Over a quarter of customers, 27%, felt that their needs were only being 'partly' met.

With the comments generally we start to see a theme emerging; people who experienced care from the same carers who arrived on time were moved to comment positively on this, equally, most of the negative comments alluded to DNA's and inconvenient / undesirable time slots. This dual theme of consistent and timely care is further expanded on in Question 3, which asks 'what works well for you?' Consistent carers who arrive on time are something clearly valued by the people who have them and are sorely missed by those who do not.

The responses to **Question 3** were also striking in terms of the level of appreciation and gratitude for 'kindness' 'companionship' 'being clean' 'breakfast' and a 'hot drink on return from dialysis'.

In Questions 1, 2, and 3, respondents had offered up the issue of timekeeping themselves; it was now raised specifically by **Question 4**, as people were asked 'how often do staff arrive on time'? Although only 14% of service users reported that staff always arrived on time, the

76% who reported that carers 'mostly' arrived on time, felt like an overall positive response given the nature of the work and the travelling involved.

On the balance of probability though, 8% of customers saying their carer 'never' arrived on time would bear further probing and investigation; this appeared too high.

Likewise Question 5 asked 'how often does the same carer provide your care?' Again on the face of it, the response was positive with 74% of people saying 'mostly' they had the same carer. Although this was quite a positive return, this was also the issue that sparked the most comment elsewhere.

Having the 'same carer' would appear to be the single most important issue for people, in which case perhaps it is not as positive as it appears.

In **Question 5**, although a high response reported they 'mostly' (74%) had the same carer, only 10% of service users **always** had the same carers, 14% '**sometimes**' had the same carer, and 1% said they '**never**' had the same carer.

If applied to the overall Domiciliary Care customer population this figure may or may not be deemed satisfactory. In the light of logistics, it is probably a higher satisfaction level than in many other geographical areas, however if you then factor in the importance level ascribed by respondents this may be one that is worth looking at as a standard to measure for maintenance if not improvement.

In **Question 6(a)**, we moved on to look at whether people knew how long the carer that came should be staying for each call. 89% of people said they did know, with 11% of people not knowing. This was interesting as it would point towards a good proportion of consumers knowing their care plan. But again we may be seeing a correlation between the figure of people who answered 'no' and the people, in Question1, who said they were not involved very much in the planning of their care.

However, when people were asked if the carers actually stayed for the allotted time for each call in **Question 6(b)**, the response was more concerning in that only 52% of respondents felt that the carers 'always' stayed for the allotted time. This statistic is a matter of concern when placed against the number of people who know how long the carer should be staying for (89%). We had originally thought that there might be a correlation between those who paid in full for their care and the number of people who did or did not feel that the carer stayed for the whole of the allotted time, however there appeared to be no such correlation.

In **Question 7**, people were asked about the 'performance' of the carer in the delivery of the care through the vehicle of asking the customer to gauge how well trained they considered their carer (s) to be. 76% of customers believed their carer to be 'very well trained'; however a massive 24% of customers said that they felt the carer to be only 'partly' trained. This would seem to indicate a source of concern for commissioners.

In **Question 8**, people were asked about their medication; this question is important as getting medication right is a safeguarding issue and the results here are a little concerning. 39% of service users said that the carer helped them manage their medication and of that group 23% said that the carers only 'sometimes' got it right. Perhaps an area that care agencies need to look at more closely.

Question 9 asked services users 'if they could improve one thing about the care they receive, what would that be'. This question was designed to encourage current recipients of the service to share their ideas on how they thought the service could be improved. Not unsurprisingly the majority of responses related to improvements in consistency of carer,

carers arriving on time and a need to improve communication between the cared for, the carer and the Provider agency. All comments received can be found in Appendix A.

Question 10 was a challenging question about values and beliefs, and may have a very subjective interpretation causing some discussion and debate during the test run. The most surprising aspect of this question was the level of response with nearly all of our respondents providing an answer. Overall 90% of people do feel that their carers **always** understand and respect their values and beliefs, with only 10% saying this only happened '**sometimes**' This feels like a high positive but is also probably consistent with the level of diversity in the local population and its workforce.

However, in **Question 11**, when asked about communication with their carer, only 72% of people surveyed said that they could **'always'** communicate easily with their carer. 28% said that they could only **'sometimes'** communicate easily. Again an area that was a lower positive than expected especially given the response to Question 10. It could be speculated that linguistic diversity of the care workforce might be responsible however another explanation could be the level of hearing impairment in the customer population and lack of training amongst carers in communicating with deaf and hearing impaired people.

In **Question 12 (a) and (b),** requesting changes to their care plans was not a regular occurrence only 29% having done so, but of that group, 91% felt that those changes had been successfully achieved. This does not reveal a great deal about changes to Care Plans and further information would be needed. However, it would be interesting to hear the care agencies / commissioner's feedback on the volume of change requests that they receive and how manageable they are.

Question 13 looked at complaints made by service users and this would be a very useful area to compare data from the survey with the care agencies feedback statistics. 34% of our sample said that they had made a complaint and of that group 29% said that their complaint **had not been satisfactorily resolved**. If these results are inconsistent with the agency returns on complaints, then this area will need some commissioning attention.

When asked in **Question 14**, when reviewing their care, 'to what degree were you consulted about 'how' you wanted your care delivered', 69% felt that this had happened 'to a large degree' with 29% saying it had happened only 'to a moderate degree'. Between 1 and 2% said it had not happened at all. This question was designed to elicit how involved people feel in planning their care; specifically, at the point of review, overall this is perhaps a fairly negative result that needs to be relayed to social care staff that review care plans.

Question 15 is very important as it hits at the heart of the service being delivered; maintaining people's independence in their own home. Service users were asked to what degree did the service they receive achieve this. 73% of people responded that for them this was achieved to 'a large degree', however the remainder, 27% of respondents said this had only been achieved to a 'moderate' or 'small degree'. On the basis of this evidence it would appear that over a quarter of customers are saying that the intervention is not working for them. This we would suggest may be more of a commissioning issue than a service delivery issue and more evidence should be sought regarding this outcome. Interestingly in Question 18, 11% of respondents told us they had 'unmet needs' and therefore the immediate question this provokes, from the analysis of questions 15 and 18, is 'is the wrong product being commissioned?'

In **Question 16**, when asked if their carer allowed them to retain their personal dignity, 93% of people told us that their carers helped them maintain their personal dignity to 'large degree' with a worrying 7% saying this only happened to 'moderate degree'.

Summary

Overall there appeared to be a relatively high level of positive responses to the questions asked and therefore satisfaction with the care services that people receive in their own homes in Central Bedfordshire.

There were however, areas of concern where a significant minority of respondents (usually over 25%) identified serious dissatisfactions. These are the areas we have concentrated on in our key findings and recommendations.

This is a particularly difficult group to survey using this approach and a more focussed face to face discussion with a random sample would significantly improve the quality of the data.

Key Findings:

The results of this survey would suggest the following:

- Overall people need to feel more involved in planning and reviewing their care.
- The better and more routinely people are informed about delivery logistics and issues the better able they are to manage their expectations (from comments).
- Having the 'same carer' was the single most important issue for people.
- People who 'always' or 'mostly' had the same carer were the most satisfied customers.
- Having 'timely' care is also critically important to customers.
- The most dissatisfied customers were those who did not receive 'timely' care.
- On the whole customers know exactly how long the carer should be with them and only approximately half of all customers surveyed felt they were getting their commissioned hours.
- Nearly a quarter of respondents felt that their carer was not fully trained to deliver their care
- Of the people whose carers helped them manage their medication, nearly a quarter said that they only sometimes got this right.
- 28% of respondents said that they could only 'sometimes' easily communicate with their carer.
- 29% of customers who had raised a complaint felt their complaints had not been properly resolved.
- 27% of customers surveyed told us that their service only helped them to remain independent to a 'moderate' or 'small' degree.
- 11% of people told us they had unmet needs.
- 7% of people told us that their dignity was not fully maintained.

Recommendations:

 Performance Indicators for Domiciliary Care Providers should be reviewed against the key findings of this survey.

Possible questions to ask:

- Are we measuring the right things, for example, is there a 'same carer' Performance Indicator?
- Is there a managing medication process and measure?
- Does carer training include how to manage hearing aids and communicate with hearing impaired people? Can this be measured?
- Is the data collected on a daily basis regarding time spent with customers reliable?
- Is it being used appropriately to monitor performance?
- If that data is inconsistent with the survey results why might that be?
- What existing returns are made by the agencies on customer complaints and are they consistent with the findings of the survey.
- Are change requests monitored?
- What can be measured to improve the quality of face to face care delivery?
- Commissioners should further review and survey customer opinion about services to help people live independently. This should also be with reference to the current Day Care Opportunities Review.
- 3) Officers who are responsible for Care Assessment Plans and Reviews should consider this survey's findings and further identify additional person centred techniques to involve and inform Domiciliary Care customers more extensively at both the care planning and the care review stage.

Contact:

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QUESTIONNAIRE

Question 1: When your Care Plan was designed, were you involved in the planning? (Please tick)			
	To a large degree (59%)		To a moderate degree (29%)
	To a small degree (6%)		Not at all (5%)
Question 2:(a) Do you feel that your current care agency (provider) meets your needs? (Please tick)			
	Completely (73%)	Partly (27%)	No (0 response)
(b) If you answered 'no' to this question, can you tell us why?			

All Comments received to this question are as follows:

- Sometimes carers arriving 06.30am far too early then back for lunch at 11.30am
- Have asked for over a year for earlier time in the morning.
- The carers do turn up and help with personal care.
- The carers come at convenient times for me.
- Sometimes they are late or cancel my call in error.
- Turn up on time. Some carers who I know and have a good relationship with. Interested in what I need. Able to listen and offer advice. They go the extra mile and really care.
- Monday to Wednesday always OK. Thursdays sometimes a problem.
- Mostly personal care.
- Having a regular carer.
- Consistency of carers and calls are on time.
- I have only been with this provider for 3 weeks so only time will tell but they appear to be much better than my previous provider.
- Feel safe Care plan works in every way.
- I am quite happy with the care I receive
- Having someone come in in the evenings.

Question 3:

What works really well for you?

All comments received in response to this question are as follows:

- Knowing my stepfather will be seen by carers regularly throughout the day.
- Someone to make a drink and possibly something to eat when I have come back from dialysis.
- Having a carer I can rely on.
- They do a good job.
- Continuity of care.
- If possible seeing the same friendly faces each day not different ones all the week.
- A chat with a carer.
- All aspects of care.
- Access to day centre care morning and evening, help with showering, dressing, catheter care.
- Carer always communications through Dad's personal folder. Good way to keep informed on both sides.
- Consistency with regular carers who understand my needs.
- Ensuring my pad is changed and I am clean.
- Helping getting washed and dressed and helping getting my artificial limb back on.
- I have only been with this provider for 3 weeks so only time will tell but they appear to be much better than my previous provider.
- Regular staff who understand and meet all care needs effectively.
- They have time for you, work very well together.
- Being on time.
- Early morning call 7am and evening call 7.50; companionship; can go out with a carer of my choice.
- I am disabled so any help is much appreciated.
- Having a carer help with my breakfast.
- Morning and evening visit to help with personal care.
- Medication administration when I get in a muddle with my meds.
- They do turn up but not always at the correct time.
- Able to provide type of care required to meet my needs.
- If you get the same care person and at the same time would be good.
- Having a carer still gives me a certain amount of independence but I still need help with a few things.
- Regular and consistent staff in attendance each day.
- I like my usual carers on a regular basis (only different in emergencies or holidays).

•	Regular named carers on a fixed day schedule.	Weekly listing is so that we
	know which carer to expect to be coming.	

- To a large degree. The fact it is mostly the same group of carers who call.
- The kindness of the carers.
- The time my carer comes to get me up in the morning.
- The care they give.
- All care staff are friendly and helpful
- The care I get is perfect
- The care provided is very good
- Having carers to carry out tasks which would otherwise have to be done by my family.

Question 4: How often do your care home staff arrive on time? (Please tick)					
	Always (6%)	Mostly (76%)	Never (8%)		
Question 5: How often does the	ne same Carer come	to provide your h	nome care? (Please tick)		
	Always (10%)	Mostly (74%)	Sometimes Never (14%) (1%)		
Question 6: (a) Do you know how long your Carer(s) should be staying for each call? (Please tick)					
	Yes (89%)	No (11%)			
(b) Do you feel yo tick)	our Carer(s) is staying	for the whole tim	ne allocated for each call?	(Please	
	Always (52%)	Mostly (34%)	Sometimes Never (12%) (3%)		

Question 7: How well trained do you think your Carer(s) are to meet your needs? (Please tick)				
Very train (76%	ed	Partly trained (24%)	Not very well trained (0 response)	
Question 8: (a) Do the Carer(s) help	p you manage y	our medication? (F	Please tick)	
Yes (39%	(a)	No (61%)		
(b) If yes , do they get in	t right? (Please t	tick)		
Alwa (77%		Sometimes (23%)	Never (0 response)	
-	oonse to this quion is a safegua		licate a problem -	
(c) Have you ever miss	sed your medicat	tion due to your ho	ome care service? (Ple	ase tick)
Yes (13%	5)	No (87%)		
Question 9: If you could improve one thing about the care you receive what would that be? All comments received to this question are as follows:				
 More communication in detail. Getting up early in mornings and going to bed at night. Earlier timeslots in the morning. Have the same carer regularly. Consistency of carers. Having the same care worker every day. Be on time. I am very happy with the way it is. They provide fantastic care to me and my wife. 				

Established time and consistency of number of carers.

- Care call is excellent.
- Consistency of same carer.
- More personal care. Shaving, cleaning teeth and a small wash down.
- If there is a change in times or carer that the care company could phone and let the live-in carer know.
- Punctuality.
- Regular attendance on a Thursday.
- Under review at the moment.
- More regular times they arrive.
- Regular staff.
- Provide evening and weekend calls.
- That if a carer is running late that I got a phone call to inform me of this.
- Fentanyl patches every third day can often be problematic.
- The times they arrive and the quality of work.
- Communication between the office staff and the carers would help the service users.
- Office based staff communicating with others consistently and knowledgeably.
- Ideal times but they are very good anyway. It is difficult for the carers to be in two places at the same time. I have to have an early morning call and sometimes they can't do that but they try to accommodate.
- A more uniform time of arrival especially in the evenings.
- Consistent times.
- Coming on time.
- Keeping to the visiting timetable.
- Punctuality, although carers at present arriving mostly on time, during the past few months timekeeping has been erratic, with carers arriving late, often without the care provider informing me in advance. Calls which do not take place at the prescribed times disrupt the planned schedule for meals and the administration of medication.

Question 10: (a) Do you feel that your Carer(s) understand and respect your values and beliefs? (Please tick)					
	Always Sometimes Never (10%) (0 response)				
(b) If you answered never , what needs do they not meet?					
	No additional comments were received in answer to this question				

Question 11: Are you able to communicate easily with your Carer? (Please tick)				
Always Sometimes Never				
(72%) (28%) (0 response)				
Question 12:				
(a) Have you ever requested a change to your care plan? (Please tick)				
Yes No (71%)				
(b) If yes , has your home care provider been flexible when you requested the change? (Please tick)				
Yes No (91%)				
Question 13: (a) Have you ever made a complaint about the care you receive? (Please tick)				
Yes No				
(34%) (66%)				
(b) If yes , were you satisfied with how the complaint was handled? (Please tick)				
Yes No (29%)				
It should be noted this is a poor score.				
(a) If no , why not?				
 There need to be some improvement in managing complaints Have a live-in carer and pop in carers, morning and evening, all my carers know 				
my needs and have been coming for a long time				
 It was never handled properly – was promised a carer to take him to church at 11.00 26th June 2016 to remember his wife – no one came/ Complained to 				
agency but has had no reply.				
 Monday to Wednesday no problem, Thursdays sometimes no-one and sometimes too late 				
 I have no need to complain as they all look after me well 				
Because nothing changed, and they still do not arrive at the correct times. If lote for example reason for leteness not always given, and no follow up the				
 If late for example reason for lateness not always given, and no follow up the following day 				

Question 14: When reviewing your care, were you asked how you wanted your care delivered? (Please tick)					
	To a large degree (69%)		To a moderate degree (29%)		
	To a small degree (1%)		Not at all (0 response)		
Question 15: Does your Carer h	nelp to keep you indepe	endent in	your own home? (Please tick)		
	To a large degree (73%)		To a moderate degree (26%)		
	To a small degree (1%)		Not at all (0 response)		
Question 16: Does your Carer a	allow you to retain your	personal	I dignity? (Please tick)		
	To a large degree (93%)		To a moderate degree (7%)		
	To a small degree (0 response)		Not at all (0 response)		
The high response to this question is concerning					
Question 17: Do you pay for your home care package? (Please tick)					
	Completely (31%)	Partly (69%)	Not at all (0 response)		
Question 18: Do you have any other needs which are not currently being met by your home care Providers? (Please tick)					
	Yes (11%)	No (89%)			
If yes , please spe	cify?				

All comments received to this question are as follows:

- Cleaning the house
- Installing disabled facilities to provide easy access to the house and a wet room/cooking facilities
- Condition is deteriorating, not able to do everything I want
- Under review 8th August 2016
- Someone to speak my language to communicate fully
- If possible I would like carers to be able to take me out in the wheelchair at times.

Question 19:

Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the care you receive?

All comments from respondents are listed below:

- Continuity of care not always provided new carers do not always understand capacity and needs of my stepfather. Training in understanding dementia patients required by many carers.
- Completed by son as father suffers dementia.
- Violet carers are great. Their office staff are mostly respectful but odd few can be quite rude when informing them of change.
- At the moment the care package is only to do with personal care. It should include 1 and 2 (at question 18).
- Helper's home care are good but my last care company Serve-a-Care should be shut down!
- As said, the care provider, Violets, are fantastic and are extremely well
 valued by myself, my wife and my children. They are a credit to their
 profession, and they do everything to accommodate our needs.
- Carers arrive anytime within 2.5 hours i.e., 8.15 10.45. One particular week recently five different carers in 5 days, surely the idea is to build rapport with same couple of carers?
- Quite adequate at present.
- This form was completed by my live-in carer with my consent as I am unable to write. She asked me the questions and went through the answers with me.
- They are so unreliable I am waiting for a lunchtime visit it is now 2.30pm and no-one has arrived, no one answering phone either.
- Mondays to Wednesdays perfect. Thursdays sometimes no-one turns up or rings to say they won't.
- I think the carers should stay for the full amount of time they are being paid for, even if they have washed/shaved/changed me etc. They could have a five or ten minute chat.

- Mostly OK. Difficult with different staff and family needs to be around to guide the agency workers – would not be effective if living alone.
- Overall excellent care provided. Regular staff who complete visits
- Some carers are brilliant. Others not so. On occasions when late we receive phone call but there are times when one of their other calls have problems. Overall very good
- We, that is my wife and I can find no fault in the care we receive. They look after me very well and I feel very lucky to have such a good care plan. They have never let us down.
- Office staff polite. They have an email system that works well. I can let them know if I go away in hospital, cancel care within 48 hours. Carers are kind, trustworthy and I have a very good rapport with them.
- I am delighted to receive help and have no complaints whatsoever
- Care Watch provides a great service Thank you
- The social call when I go shopping is meant to be two hours, recently it has only been 1 hour due to staff shortage
- The form was completed by granddaughter as my grandma is unable to read, write or speak English. This is due to her being 100% deaf in both ears
- The last two weeks Monday/Friday the same care person came. Same time every day. If this was to continue it would be good. Weekends is a nightmare. Sometimes it is not till 11am or they do not turn up always late at weekend so don't know to wait you try do it myself my sister and husband live with me so I am not on my own
- When running late it would be nice to get a call to say why. This does not happen very often especially my lunch time call, as it alleviates the pressure of my partner if he is out shopping. As he has been ill himself
- Current providers are good in their provision. Please do not stretch their staff and resources with too many claimants more than can be coped with.
- Regular carers excellent very pleased with Linda, Sue and Julie, all brilliant.
- Office admin need to get some of the times correct but they always call if they are going to be late. Always helpful and flexible.
- When one goes sick they haven't enough staff to cover
- Customer unaware of service provider's name or details of care package (very happy with service)

Thank you for completing this survey. If you have any queries or questions about this survey please contact Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire direct on **0300 303 8554**, by email to info@healthwatch-centralbedfordshire.org.uk or write to: Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire, Capability House, Wrest Park, Silsoe, Bedfordshire, MK45 4HR

Please post the questionnaire back to us in the envelope provided by the **20**th **August 2016** to:

Contracts Team, Central Bedfordshire Council, Ampthill Area Office Houghton Lodge, Houghton Close, Ampthill, Bedford, MK45 2TG