

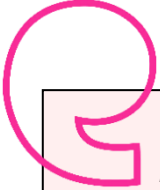
Homecare Check Annual Report 2025–26 September 2026

**Residents' experiences of home care
services contracted by Brighton & Hove
City Council**



**Committed
to quality**





"We would like to thank Healthwatch Brighton & Hove, the volunteers involved in this work, and the residents and family members who took the time to share their experiences. Their feedback provides valuable insight into how home care services are experienced by people in receipt of services across the city.

It is particularly encouraging that the report highlights high levels of satisfaction with care workers and recognises the important role home care plays in supporting people to maintain their independence and remain connected to their communities.

The report also identifies areas where there are opportunities to strengthen practice, particularly in relation to office communication, continuity of care and the management of concerns and complaints. We welcome these findings as part of our ongoing commitment to listening, learning and continuous improvement.

We also recognise the significant recruitment and retention challenges that continue to affect the social care sector, both locally and nationally. Working in partnership with providers, people in receipt of services, their families and wider stakeholders, the council will use the learning from this report to inform ongoing quality assurance activity, contract monitoring and service improvement, with the aim of achieving the best possible outcomes for local people."

Claire Rowland

**Commissioning and Performance Manager – Home Care and Extra Care
– Homes and Adult Social Care, Brighton & Hove City Council**

Experiences of being a volunteer on the homecare visit programme:

"I've just started volunteering with Homecare Check and so far, it's been a stimulating and enjoyable experience. I have already learned so much about the care sector through in-depth conversations with service users and care workers.

It's an unusual opportunity to drop into people's lives and share their insights, particularly during what is often the most challenging time of their lives.

Anna Robinson-Pant, Lay Assessor Volunteer



Homecare Check Annual Report 2024–25

Contents

Summary – An annual report of residents’ experiences of home care services	5
Summary of findings.....	5
Previous report comparison – key changes.....	8
Common themes	11
Main report – Residents experiences of home care services.....	12
Introduction	12
Method	12
Sample Profile	14
Findings.....	16
About the care workers.....	16
Do you usually you see the same care workers?.....	16
Do all your care workers wear a uniform and/or show you their ID?	17
Do you feel your care workers:	19
Are you happy with the way your care workers treat you?	21
About the office staff	23
Do you find the office staff helpful?	23
Do you know how to get in touch with your carer worker's supervisor?	24
Can you talk openly with the supervisor about your care and any concerns you have?.....	25
Have you ever made a complaint about the care service you receive?	26
If you made a complaint, were you happy with how it was handled?	27
In the past year, have you asked your homecare provider for help finding information about support, services, or benefits?	28
If you asked for help, were you happy with the support received?	29
About the Service	30
Are you informed about when care workers will visit and who they will be?	30
Do the times your care workers visit suit you?.....	31
Does your homecare provider keep you informed when there are changes to your planned care?.....	32

Homecare Check Annual Report 2024-25

Does the care you receive meet your needs?	33
Overall, is the help you get from your care provider useful to you?	35
What do you think your homecare provider does well?	37
What do you think your homecare provider could do better?	38
Other	39
Do you know what to do if you're unhappy with the service?	39
Do you know what to do if you think someone is being hurt or harmed?	41
We use your feedback to check how well homecare providers are doing. Do you think this is a good and useful thing to do?	42
Conclusion and Common themes	44
Appendix 1 – Leaflet	46
Thank you	49

Homecare Check Annual Report 2024–25

Summary – An annual report of residents’ experiences of home care services

On behalf of Brighton & Hove City Council, Healthwatch Brighton and Hove volunteers regularly interview residents about the homecare services they receive that are provided by independent companies, but that are paid for – fully or partly – by the council.

Residents may be living in their own home, private or council rented accommodation, or private or council senior housing venues with extra care facilities on site.

The volunteers ask those receiving care about the quality of service they receive from their homecare provider. We report our findings to the council so they can share them with the care providers and assess the quality and safety of services being provided.

For this report, we have taken the responses from 190 people receiving home care, that were interviewed between May 2025 to May 2026. The care was from 9 different providers, two of which were delivering services in Extra Care facilities – senior housing venues which have care staff on site – which is reflected in some of the responses and comments.

Throughout the report we refer to those receiving home care as Service Users or SU’s. Direct quotes from the service user are italicised and in quotes. All other comments are written by the Lay Assessor based on SU feedback, unless indicated otherwise (daughter, friend, etc).

Summary of findings

About the care workers

Service users were overwhelmingly positive about their care workers. The majority felt carers were competent, completed the required tasks, stayed for the planned duration of visits and treated them with dignity and respect. Many described their carer worker as kind, professional and an essential source of support.

Continuity remained particularly important. Most service users said they usually saw the same care workers, and many comments highlighted the value of familiar carers who understood their routines and needs. However, where continuity was lacking, service users often reported frustration at having to repeatedly explain tasks and preferences to different carers.

A recurring theme was the difference between regular carers and cover staff. Whilst regular carers were frequently praised, some service users felt the quality

Homecare Check Annual Report 2024–25

of care could be inconsistent when cover, weekend or newly recruited staff were involved. Concerns raised included limited experience, insufficient training, poor communication skills and visits ending early.

- The majority felt their care workers completed all tasks in accordance with their care plan (89%, 170 people).
- The majority were happy or extremely happy with the way their care workers treated them (89%, 170 people).
- The majority felt their care workers were competent and trained (87%, 165 people).
- The majority felt their care workers stayed for the duration of the planned care call (87%, 165 people).
- The majority said their care workers usually arrived on time (82%, 156 people).
- Just over three-quarters of service users said they always or usually saw the same care workers (78%, 140 people).
- The majority said their workers wore a uniform (82%, 156 people), with just half (50%, 94 people) saying they showed photo ID.

About the office staff

Views of office staff were more mixed than views of care workers. Most service users knew how to contact a supervisor and felt able to discuss concerns about their care. Many spoke positively about office staff and managers, describing them as approachable, supportive and responsive.

However, some service users reported frustration with communication and follow-up. Concerns included requests not being acted upon, information not being passed on between staff, difficulties contacting the office and concerns not always being resolved. These issues were reflected in feedback about complaints, with less than half of those who had complained saying they were satisfied with how their complaint had been handled.

- The majority said they knew how to get in touch with their care workers' supervisor (83%, 158 people).
- Three-quarters felt they could talk openly with their supervisor about their care and any concerns they had (75%, 142 people).
- Just under two-thirds found the office staff very or extremely helpful (62%, 118 people).

Homecare Check Annual Report 2024–25

- Over a third had made a complaint about their care service (37%, 71 people), and of those that had, less than half were satisfied or very satisfied with how it was handled (48%, 34 people).
- Only a small minority had asked their provider for help finding information about support, services or benefits (7%, 14 people). Of these, almost two-thirds were satisfied or very satisfied with the support provided (64%, 9 people).

About the service

Most service users felt the care they received met their needs, helped them remain independent and enabled them to continue living safely at home. Many described the support as essential and said they could not manage without it.

Despite this positive feedback, communication remained the most significant area for improvement. Less than half of service users said they were routinely informed about changes to planned care or who would be visiting. Comments frequently referred to the lack of rotas, short-notice changes, inconsistent communication about delays and uncertainty about visit times.

Most people felt visit times generally suited them and that the service was useful, though some reported concerns about late or inconsistent visits, weekend provision, staffing pressures and a lack of continuity. Suggestions for improvement focused on more consistent care workers, better communication, improved training and increased staffing capacity.

- The majority felt the care they received met their needs (89%, 169 people).
- The majority felt the help they received from their homecare provider was useful (86%, 164 people).
- Over three-quarters said the times their care workers visited suited them (79%, 149 people).
- Around two-thirds agreed they had choice and control, and that their provider listened to them when making decisions about their care (65%, 124 people).
- Just under half said their homecare provider kept them informed about changes to their planned care (48%, 91 people).
- Less than half said they were informed about when care workers would visit and who they would be (43%, 82 people).

Other

Homecare Check Annual Report 2024–25

Most service users knew what to do if they were unhappy with their care service and understood how to raise concerns. However, many relied on family members to help monitor care, raise concerns and communicate with providers where necessary.

Awareness of safeguarding processes was lower, although many service users or their relatives knew how to seek help if someone was at risk of harm. During visits, volunteers provided information and contact details where required.

Service users were generally positive about the Homecare Check process itself. Many welcomed the opportunity to share their experiences and felt it was important that feedback was gathered directly from people receiving care. Several commented that the process would be particularly valuable if the findings were used to drive improvements in service delivery.

- The majority said they knew what to do if they were unhappy with the service (80%, 152 people).
- Over two-thirds said they knew what to do if they thought someone was being hurt or harmed (67%, 128 people).
- The majority of service users thought it was a good thing that the council uses their feedback to check how well homecare providers are doing (90%, 170 people).

Previous report comparison – key changes

Overall, the findings continue to show that service users are very positive about the care they receive and the support provided by care workers. There was also a small increase in the proportion of service users who felt their care met their needs.

However, there were declines in several areas relating to communication, continuity and information sharing. Fewer service users reported being informed about who would be visiting them, saw the same care workers regularly, or were informed when changes were made to their planned care. Satisfaction with complaint handling and support with accessing information and advice also declined.

Whilst most service users continued to know how to contact their supervisor and felt able to speak openly about concerns, comments throughout the review suggest that many still feel communication between providers, care workers, service users and families could be improved.

Homecare Check Annual Report 2024–25

Positive changes – more service users (5%+):

- felt able to talk openly with their supervisor about their care and any concerns – increased from 66% to 75% (+9%).
- knew what to do if they were unhappy with the service – increased from 74% to 80% (+6%).

Negative changes – fewer service users (5%-):

- said all care workers showed an ID badge – decreased from 68% to 50% (-18%).
- were satisfied with the help provided when seeking information, advice, support or benefits – decreased from 79% to 64% (-15%).
- Were satisfied with how complaints were handled – decreased from 59% to 48% (-11%).
- were informed about when care workers would visit and who they would be – decreased from 53% to 43% (-10%).
- said they often saw the same care workers – decreased from 86% to 78% (-8%).
- said their provider kept them informed about changes to planned care – decreased from 56% to 48% (-8%).
- said their care workers usually arrived on time – decreased from 87% to 82% (-5%).

Summary Comparison Table

This table compares responses in this report with those from October 2025. The 'Diff' column shows the percentage point change between results. Green indicates positive changes, while red/pink indicates negative changes.

This year's results reflect a different cohort of assessed providers, so the apparent decline should not be interpreted as evidence of deterioration across the whole market.

Homecare Check Annual Report 2024–25

Table 1: Summary comparison table

Question	Oct-25	Sep-26	Diff
Do you often see the same care workers? ('always' or 'usually')	86%	78%	-8%
Do all your care workers wear a uniform? (% 'yes')	84%	82%	-2%
Do all your care workers show you their ID? (% 'yes')	68%	50%	-18%
Are you informed about when care workers will visit and who they will be? (% 'yes')	53%	43%	-10%
Do the times your care workers visit suit you? (% 'yes')	79%	78%	-1%
Do your care workers usually arrive on time? (% 'always' or 'usually')	87%	82%	-5%
Do you feel your care workers are competent and trained? (% 'always' or 'usually')	84%	87%	3%
Do you feel your care workers complete all tasks in accordance with the care plan? (% 'always' or 'usually')	87%	89%	2%
Do you feel your care workers stay for the duration of the planned call? (% 'always' or 'usually')	88%	87%	-1%
How happy are you with how your care workers treat you and the relationship you have with them? (% 'extremely' or 'very')	91%	90%	-1%
Do you find the office staff helpful? (% 'extremely' or 'very')	65%	62%	-3%
Do you know how to get in touch with your care worker's supervisor? (% 'yes')	79%	83%	4%
Can you talk openly with the supervisor about your care and any concerns you have? (% 'yes')	66%	75%	9%
Does your homecare provider keep you informed about changes to your planned care? (% 'always' or 'usually')	56%	48%	-8%
Do you agree that you have choice and control, and that your care provider listens to you, when making decisions about your care? (% 'strongly agree' or 'agree')	68%	66%	-2%
Have you ever made a complaint to the homecare provider about the service? (% 'yes')	37%	37%	0%
If you did, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with how the complaint was handled? (% 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied')	59%	48%	-11%
In the last 12 months, have you asked your homecare provider for help in finding information and advice about support, services, or benefits? (% 'yes')	7%	7%	0%
If you did, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the help they provided? (% 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied')	79%	64%	-15%
Does the care you receive meet your needs? (% 'yes')	86%	89%	3%
Overall, how useful do you feel is the help you get from the provider? (% 'extremely' or 'very')	86%	86%	0%
Do you know what to do if you're unhappy with the service? (% 'yes')	74%	80%	6%
Do you know what to do if you think someone is being hurt or harmed? (% 'yes')	67%	67%	0%
Survey Responses	211	190	

Common themes

Although there can be a variability of service within and across providers, there are a number of common themes.

1. Care workers continue to be highly valued by service users. Regular carers were frequently described as kind, professional, caring and reliable. Many service users spoke positively about the relationships they had developed with their carer workers and the role they play in helping them remain independent and safe at home.
2. Continuity and consistency of care remain among the most important issues for service users. Whilst most reported seeing the same carers regularly, continuity was one of the most frequently praised aspects of good care and one of the most common areas for improvement where it was lacking. Service users often expressed frustration at having to repeatedly explain their needs and routines to unfamiliar carers. Regular carers were generally rated more highly than cover, weekend or newer staff, with concerns sometimes raised about training, confidence and consistency of care.
3. Communication is the area most frequently identified for improvement. Less than half of service users said they were informed about planned changes to their care or about who would be visiting. Common concerns included not receiving rotas, not being informed when carers were running late, and poor communication between office staff, care workers and families.
4. Views of office staff and management are more mixed than views of care workers. Whilst many service users described office staff as helpful and supportive, others reported difficulties getting issues resolved, obtaining information, or receiving responses to concerns. This was also reflected in feedback about complaint handling.
5. Most service users feel that the care they receive meets their needs and is essential to maintaining their independence. Many commented that they would struggle to manage, remain safe, or continue living at home without the support they receive from their provider.
6. Satisfaction with complaints handling remains lower than satisfaction with care provision. Although many service users knew how to raise concerns, several felt that complaints did not always result in meaningful action or lasting improvements.
7. Family members play an important role in monitoring and coordinating care. Relatives frequently act as advocates, monitor the quality of care being delivered, raise concerns with providers and support service users who may be unable or unwilling to do so themselves. This highlights the need to ensure that

Homecare Check Annual Report 2024–25

people without family support are equally able to have concerns identified, raised and addressed.

8. Service users value being asked about their experiences. Feedback about the Homecare Check process was overwhelmingly positive, with many welcoming the opportunity to share their views and feeling that hearing directly from service users is an important part of monitoring service quality. Several respondents stressed the importance of ensuring that feedback leads to improvements.

Main report – Residents experiences of home care services

Introduction

During the period from May 2025 to May 2026, Healthwatch Brighton and Hove volunteers interviewed 190 local residents about their home care services which are fully or partly funded by Brighton & Hove City Council.

Healthwatch volunteers speak to residents – or care workers, family and friends – about their homecare providers and the quality of care they receive. We then report back to the council and care providers for review.

Healthwatch volunteer Lay Assessors may have experience of working in health services, but more often are patients, care workers, or someone with lived experience who contribute to the evaluation and improvement of public services, especially in healthcare, by offering an independent, non-clinical perspective.

Method

The Council selected a different provider each month to be assessed, not including August and December due to the high level of holidays at these times.

The process starts with the council obtaining a list of current service users from a particular service provider. The list is checked by the council to remove duplicates, errors, service users deemed inappropriate for interview, or where there may be considerations of risk.

The council then writes to all the residents to inform them of the survey, giving residents the opportunity to be excluded, or ensure they are included. Once the letters have been sent out, the council send the list to Healthwatch Brighton and Hove so we can arrange the interviews.

From this list we select service users and allocate them to our volunteers, who then contact service users directly to arrange interviews. This allocation is either

Homecare Check Annual Report 2024-25

based on geographic areas to reduce travel time for volunteers who are visiting, or is assigned randomly if they are conducting telephone interviews.

The interviews produce both qualitative and quantitative data, which is collated, analysed and compiled into a report for the council and provider. The volunteers note comments, even when the question itself was not directly answered.

SU refers to the service user that was interviewed unless indicated otherwise (daughter, friend, etc.).

All comments were written by the volunteer and quoting the SU.

Any issues of concern raised in the surveys are immediately reported to the council, often as requests for an urgent service review, or on occasion for safeguarding.

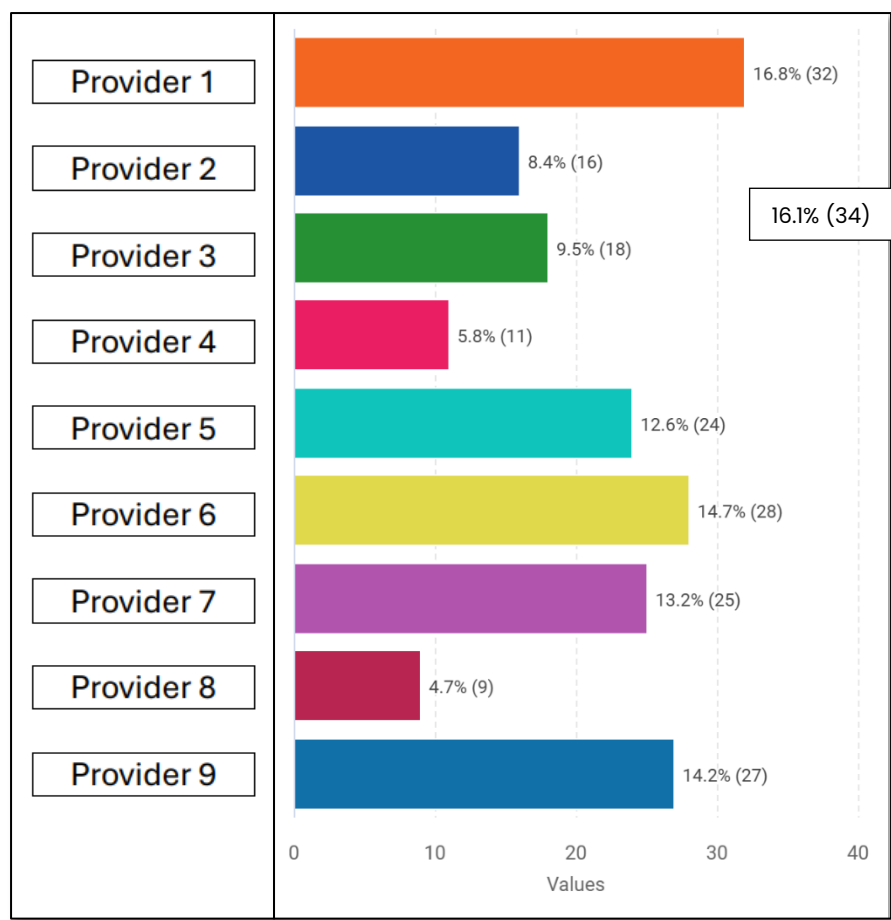
Once a report is completed it is sent to the council to assess, who then prepare a set of targeted questions for that provider based on issues raised in the report. The report and questions are sent to the provider, who will be given time to read the report and then respond to the questions raised. The provider is expected to share information/explanations on any concerns raised, outline what steps they will be taking to address the concerns, and specifying the timescales for this to be done. This provider response is shared with Healthwatch.

Number of interviews for each provider

As these are contractual agreements between the council and the providers, we cannot name the providers in this report.

Homecare Check Annual Report 2024–25

Table 2: Summary comparison table



The majority of the interviews were by telephone (60%), with remaining interviews conducted in person (40%).

The interviews all took place between May 2025 and May 2026.

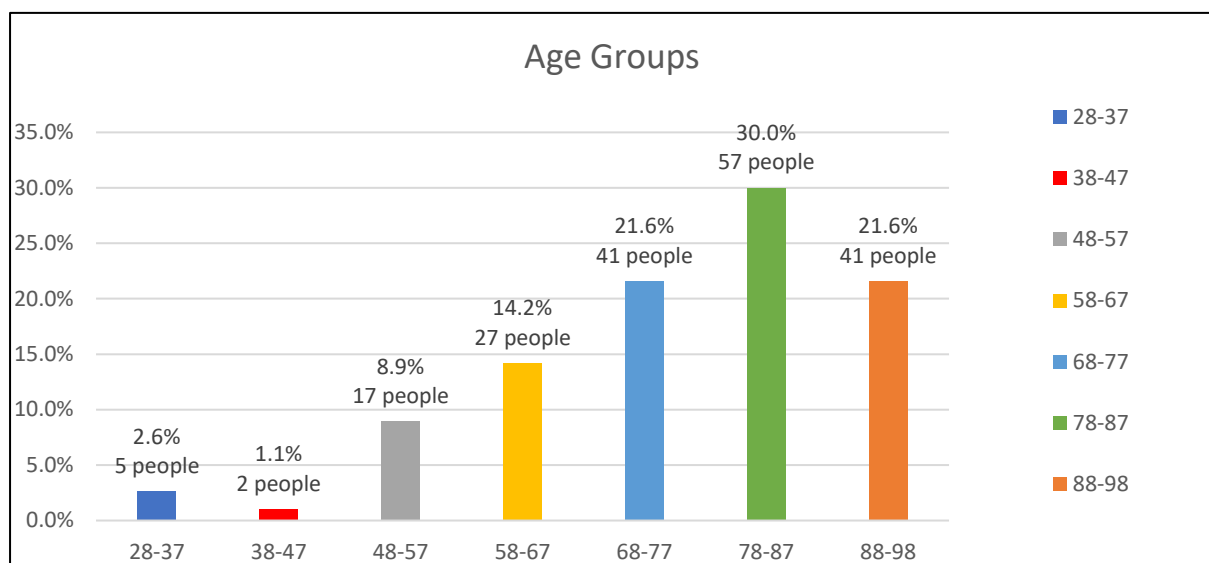
Sample Profile

Most of those interviewed were listed as female (54%, 102 people), and the majority of the remaining listed as male (45.5%, 86 people). One person was listed as ‘Other’ (.05%).

Looking at the age data, the largest age group is those aged 79–87, making up almost a third of the total (30%, 57 people). If you take everyone aged 68 and over, that accounts for almost three-quarters of those interviewed (73%, 139 people). There were very few people across the 18–47 range (4%, 7 people).

Homecare Check Annual Report 2024-25

Table 3: Age groups



The list below details the type of care SU are receiving:

- 26 people (14%) were receiving support with shopping.
- 41 people (23%) were receiving medication support.
- 70 people (37%) were receiving support with meals.
- 74 people (39%) were receiving support with housework.
- 99 people (52%) were receiving support with personal care.

In total, 190 interviews were completed from a list of 474 service users allocated to our volunteers (44%).

- 9 home care providers were assessed.
- 13 Lay Assessor Volunteers conducted the interviews.
- 77 of the interviews were in person (40%), with the remaining 113 by phone (60%).

The survey questions were grouped into the following categories and are reflected in the way the findings are presented.

1. Care workers
2. Office staff
3. The service
4. Other

Homecare Check Annual Report 2024–25

Findings

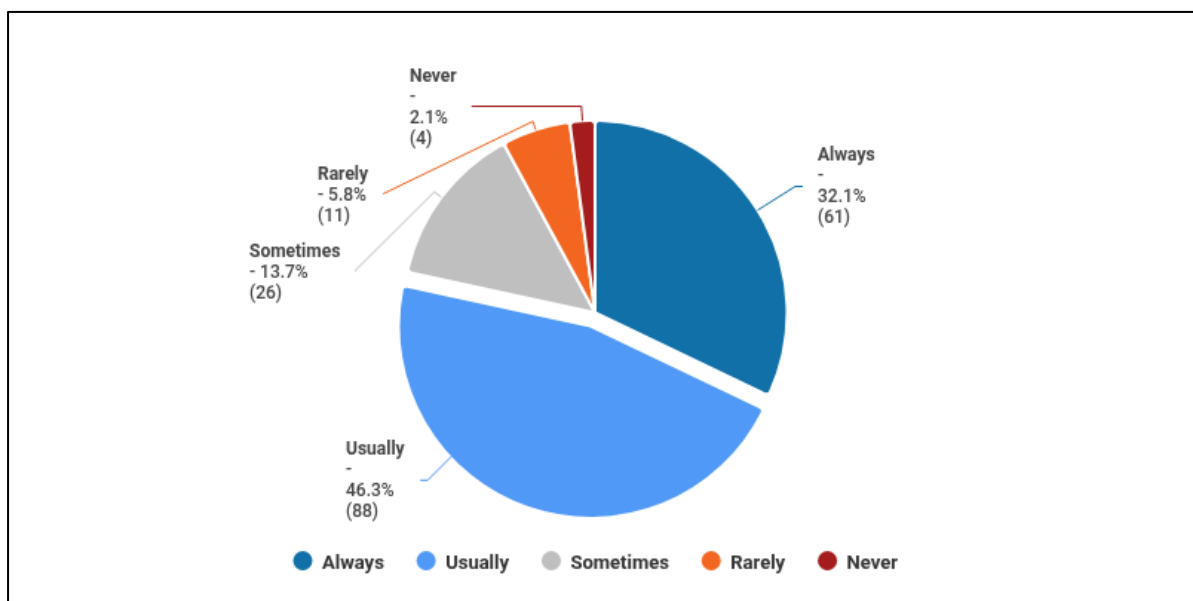
For the detailed findings refer to the summary table at the end of this section.

About the care workers

Do you usually you see the same care workers?

Just over three quarters (78%, 140 people) said they always or usually saw the same care workers. Only 2% (4 people) had said this was rarely or never.

Table 4: Do you usually you see the same care workers?



Positive comments included:

- "Very consistent."
- "The regular carers are lovely."
- Not the same carer each day, but regular carers rotate and SU knows them all.
- Daughter said that her Mum has a regular group and knows all the carers.
- SU is very happy with her regular group of carers.

Negative comments included:

- SU is autistic and important that he gets regular carers, but feels that he frequently gets different carers and has to spend too much time telling carers what needs to be done.

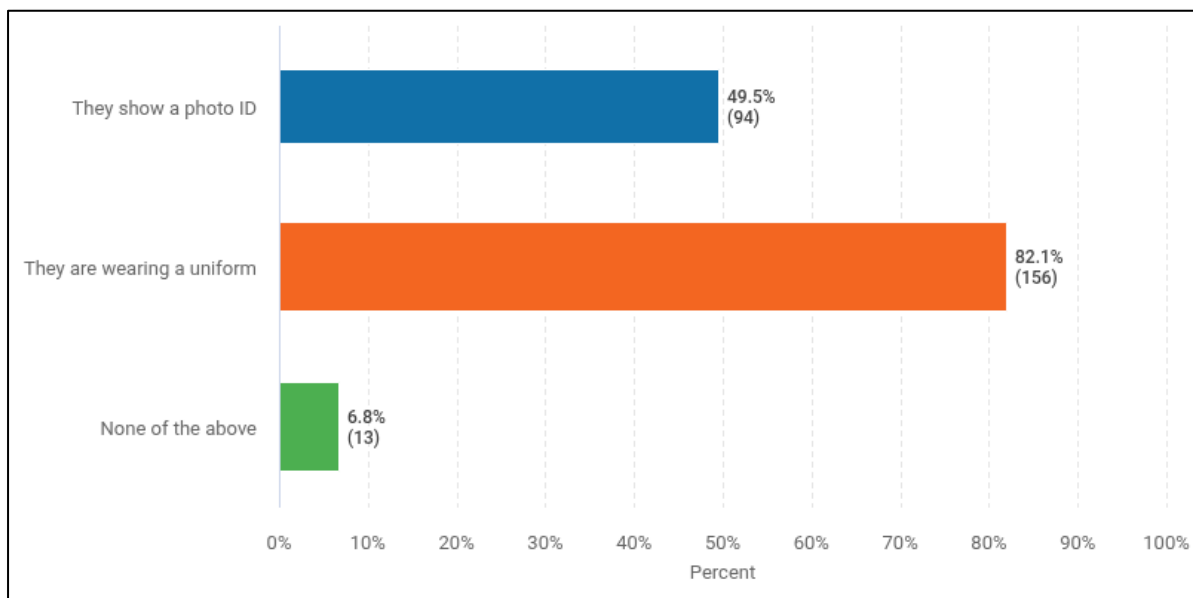
Homecare Check Annual Report 2024–25

- Usually has about 4 different carers each week. He has asked for the same carer or a couple of carers to be regular carers but, has been told that this wouldn't be possible.
- SU said it would be nice to see same person for more of the time as they keep having to go through the duties when the carer's keep changing so frequently.
- There is no consistency with carers coming to visit. This is very frustrating.

Do all your care workers wear a uniform and/or show you their ID?

The majority of new care workers were wearing a uniform (82%, 156 people), and just half showed a photo ID (50%, 94 people). Only 13 people (7%) said this was not the case.

Table 5: Do all your care workers wear a uniform and/or show you their ID?



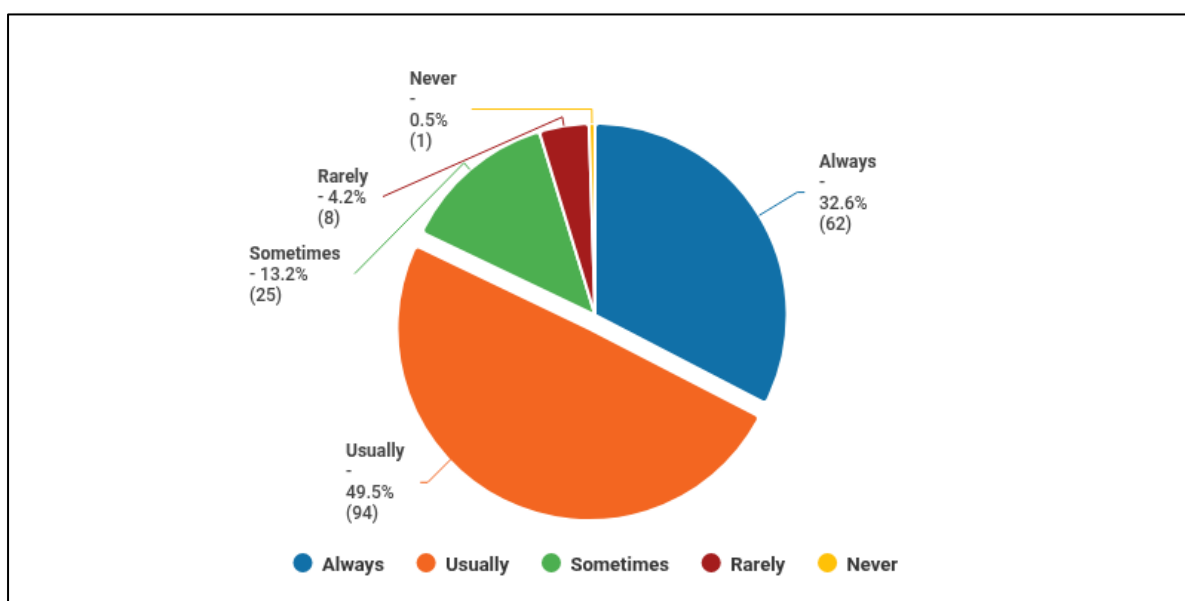
Homecare Check Annual Report 2024-25

Do your care workers usually arrive on time?

Note: A leeway of 20 minutes to account for travel is allowed, and is not considered early or late.

The majority said their care workers were always or usually on time (82%, 156 people), with only 9 people saying this was rarely or never (5%)

Table 6: Do your care workers usually arrive on time?



Positive comments included:

- SU said that they are very good about time keeping.
- Her carers were never late and came at the same time.
- There are often delays as most carers use public transport – daughter understands this though.
- The feedback highlights how flexible and accommodating the care provider was and appreciated this

Neutral comments included:

- Daughter said that she didn't know exactly the time that they arrived each day as she wasn't always there.
- Occasionally a few minutes late if they encounter transport difficulties.

Negative comments included:

- They do not know what time they are due arrive so would not know if they are early or late. This was important to the SU, not knowing what time to expect the carers.

Homecare Check Annual Report 2024-25

- Sometimes arrive at around 9 am but usually quite a bit later than this.
- Daughter said that the carers were often late as the care provider has too many Supervisors and too few carers.
- Has happened 4-5 times where SU was not told that the office has changed the time of call, and SU was waiting around for hours. It was very inconvenient.

Do you feel your care workers:

- **are competent and trained?**

The majority (87%, 165 people) felt their care workers either always or usually competent and trained. Although only a minority (2%, 4 people) felt this was rarely the case, the majority of comments were about the variability of competence amongst the care workers.

- **complete all tasks in accordance with the care plan?**

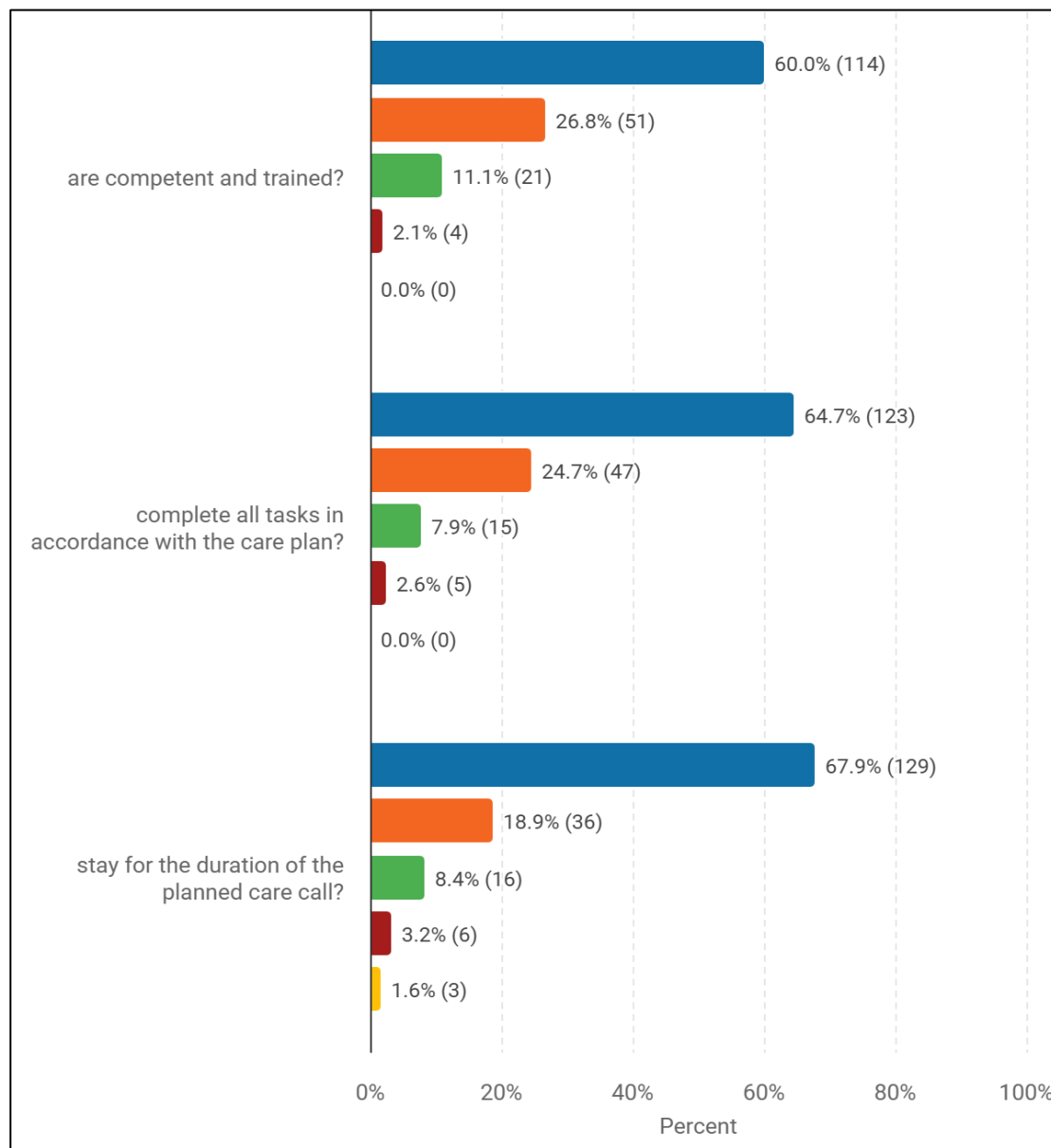
The majority (89%, 170 people) felt their care workers either always or usually completed all tasks as required. Only a minority (3%, 5 people) felt this was rarely the case.

- **stay for the duration of the planned care call?**

The majority (87%, 165 people) felt their care workers stayed for the duration of the planned visit. A minority (5%, 9 people) felt this was rarely or never the case.

Homecare Check Annual Report 2024-25

Table 7: Do you feel your care workers...



Positive comments included:

- His carers are wonderful
- She is great, she knows exactly what she is doing she goes over and above. She put cream on my legs - totally amazing!
- SU's daughter visits weekly from London and monitors his care. She was very complimentary about the level of professionalism from the care team.
- The carers are wonderful and brighten up her day...nothing is too much for them.
- Daughter said that the carers are truly amazing and treat her mum with great kindness.

Homecare Check Annual Report 2024-25

Mixed comments included:

- These comments only refer to his weekday carer. He said that it was a bit hit and miss at the weekends.
- Main carer is reliable, but cover tends to be by new staff who are untrained and do not spend allocated time with SU – not even able to make beds properly.
- Main carer working on site is very good, others less so.
- SU said that it was difficult to group all the carers together as some were better at the job than others.
- Usually not a problem all together except for some inconsistency, and non-communication from the office if carers would not turn up due to staff sickness or rescheduling.

Negative comments included:

- There was an occasion when one evening carer came and issued medications but did not stay to provide a meal. SU did not report this to any member of the team, either Carer Supervisor or the Manager
- Feels that new staff often need more training before they are empowered to carry out care services without support.
- Son feels that calls are often significantly less than 30 minutes – he is able to monitor and aware when carers arrive and leave.
- She mentioned that sometimes the care workers from abroad needed additional training in domestic tasks as they were not familiar with how to use a kettle, make toast or changing a duvet.
- Carers rush their jobs and don't seem to get them done properly. The daughter doesn't feel confident about a lot of them.

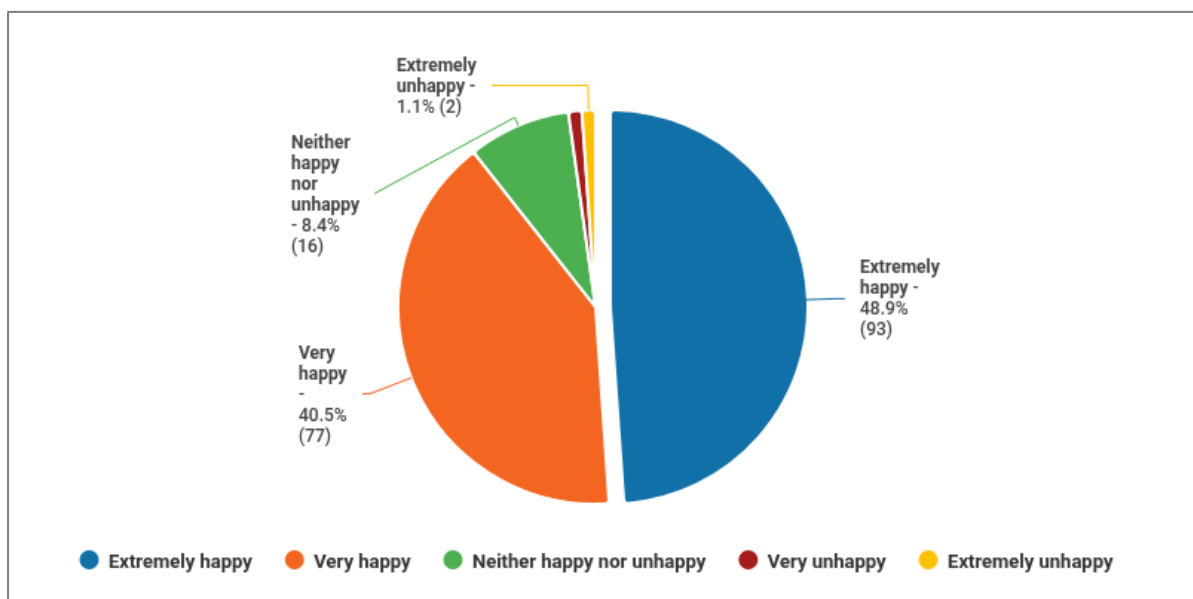
Are you happy with the way your care workers treat you?

The majority (89%, 170 people), were happy or extremely happy with how their care workers treated them. A minority (1%, 2 people) were extremely unhappy about how they were treated.

Graph 1: Are you happy with the way your care workers treat you?

Homecare Check Annual Report 2024-25

Table 8: Are you happy with the way your care workers treat you?



Positive comments included:

- SU said that all his carers are good and treat him well.
- Daughter said that all her carers were lovely and treated her with respect.
- He said that they are all very friendly.
- They are all kind and helpful.
- They always do what is expected to get done, no problem at all.

Mixed comments included:

- There has only been one incident when the SU was not happy with the care worker.... who was not as friendly or competent as the usual care workers.
- Some are really nice and have a chat and a laugh. Some barely say anything at all however much the SU prompts them. This can be awkward. Also mentioned that some of the care workers are very scruffy. The women are generally well turned-out but quite a few men are very unkempt.

Negative comments included:

- They just come and do the tasks without being friendly or talkative.
- He said that communication with some carers is limited as their English is so poor.
- Relationship is "ok" but SU is unhappy that carers are not doing the jobs they are supposed to do but is very uncomfortable speaking to carers to flag this issue.

Homecare Check Annual Report 2024-25

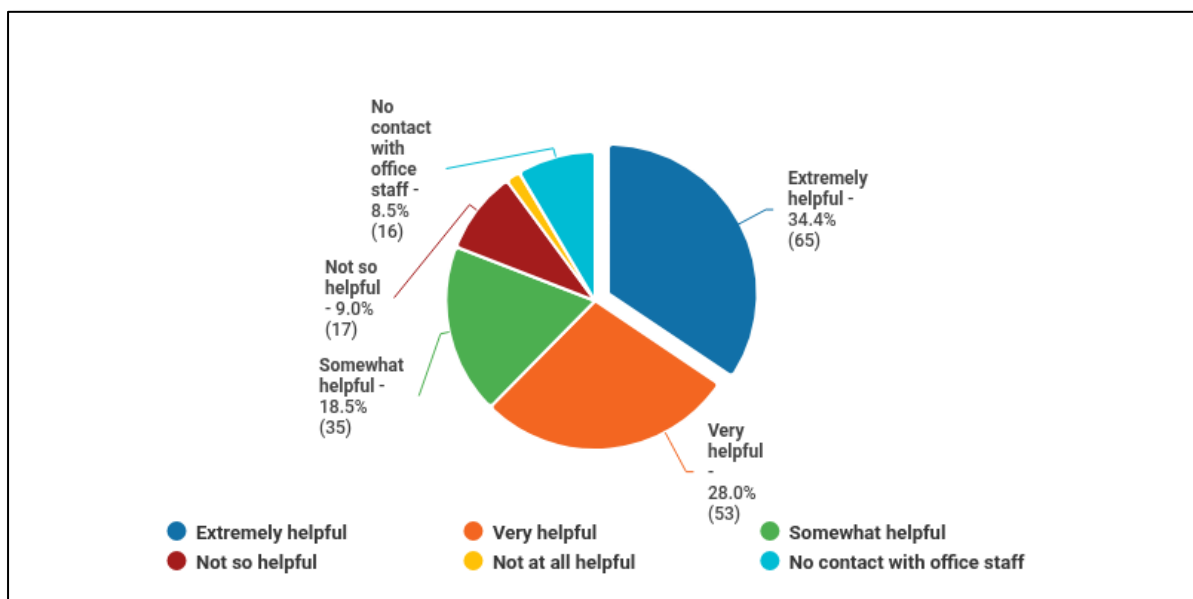
- Not too happy. Could be better. SU are sometimes left to do jobs such as tidy up as the care workers leave it for the next person.

About the office staff

Do you find the office staff helpful?

Just under two-thirds (62%, 118 people), found the office staff very or extremely helpful. 17 people (9%) found them to be not so helpful.

Table 9: Do you find the office staff helpful?



Positive comments included:

- Daughter said that the two guys who answer the phone are always very understanding and helpful and treat her with kindness.
- Next of kin believes that the office staff genuinely care about the SU and work closely with him about all aspects of the SUs care and wellbeing.
- Onsite manager is very helpful and always available.
- Generally good relationship with office staff.
- SU stated that carers are 'as good as gold' and that the office staff are very responsive.

Mixed comments included:

- SU said that they are very helpful when you speak to them, but information doesn't seem to get passed on as he is still getting calls before 4pm.

Homecare Check Annual Report 2024–25

- She said it depends who you get on the phone – some are very helpful, others less responsive.

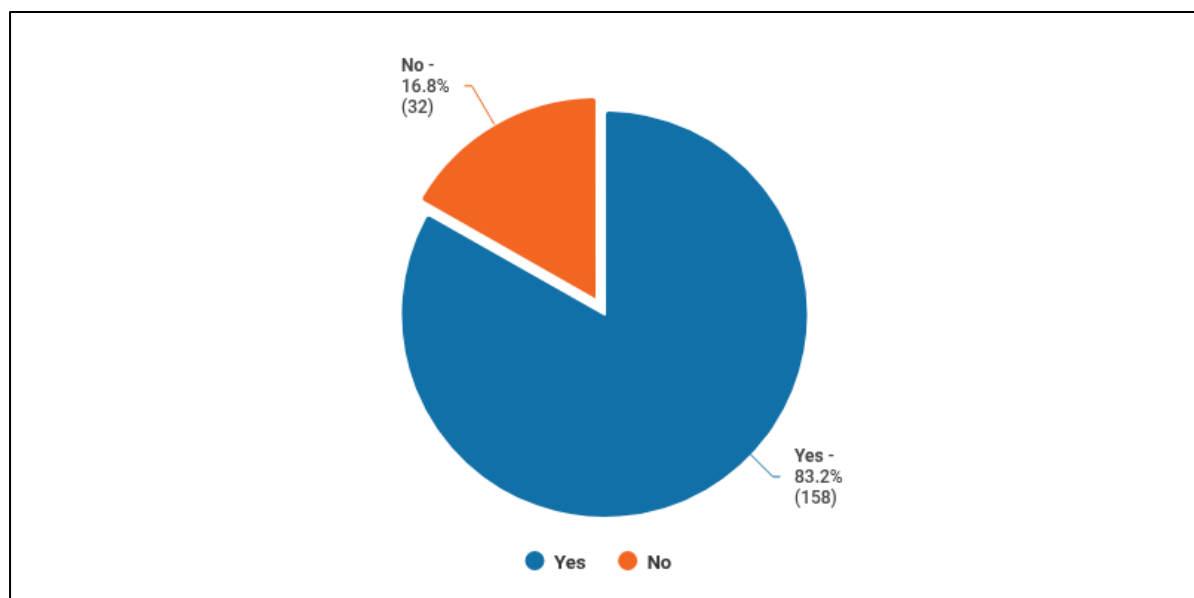
Negative comments included:

- *"They don't listen to me".*
- Not at all happy with office staff. Finds one individual in particular very arrogant and refuses to see the SU as the customer as care wholly funded by the Council.
- SU said that the office staff couldn't care less.
- *"Office is shut and no-one is there."*
- Feels that office staff can be a bit patronising and *"officious"*. Has asked for times of visits to be changed on multiple occasions but feels she was brushed off.

Do you know how to get in touch with your carer worker's supervisor?

The majority (83%, 158 people) said they knew how to get in touch with their carer's supervisor.

Table 10: Do you know how to get in touch with your carer worker's supervisor?



Positive comments included:

- Manager is onsite and easily accessible.
- See her once a week.
- Daughter said that it is easy to contact supervisor.

Homecare Check Annual Report 2024-25

- Knows the care workers' supervisor by name and goes to the office every couple of months to have coffee with them. Has a very positive relationship with them.

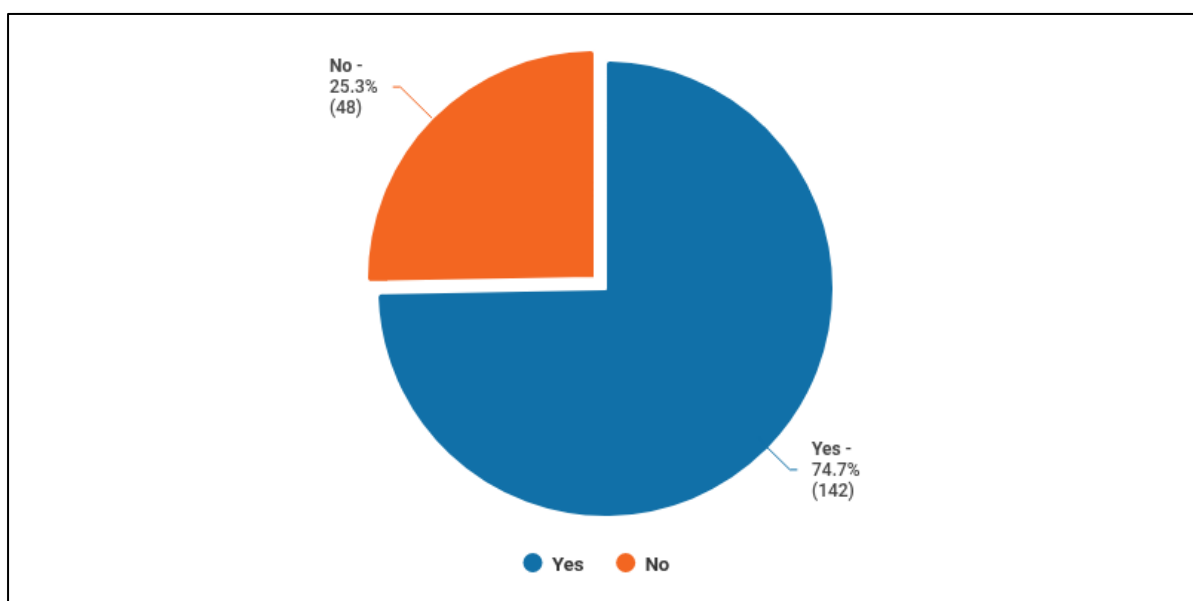
Negative comments included:

- SU can't remember having a visit from a supervisor.
- SU would like a number for the supervisor. Doesn't think they have ever had one.
- But there isn't any point to this.
- No idea who they are.

Can you talk openly with the supervisor about your care and any concerns you have?

Three quarters (75%, 142 people), felt they could talk openly with their supervisor.

Table 11: Can you talk openly with the supervisor about your care and any concerns you have?



Positive comments included:

- Daughter has ongoing constructive discussions with the supervision team.
- SU stated that if he had any concern, he is confident that it would be dealt with effectively.
- Yes, she comes round every week.
- He said that [Supervisor Name] is lovely and will always listen to you.
- He had a supervisor's visit the day before my visit.

Homecare Check Annual Report 2024-25

Mixed comments included:

- So far there has not been a need for it..
- SU feels disinclined to approach supervisor.
- User feels nervous about contacting supervisor as they don't want to get anyone into trouble.

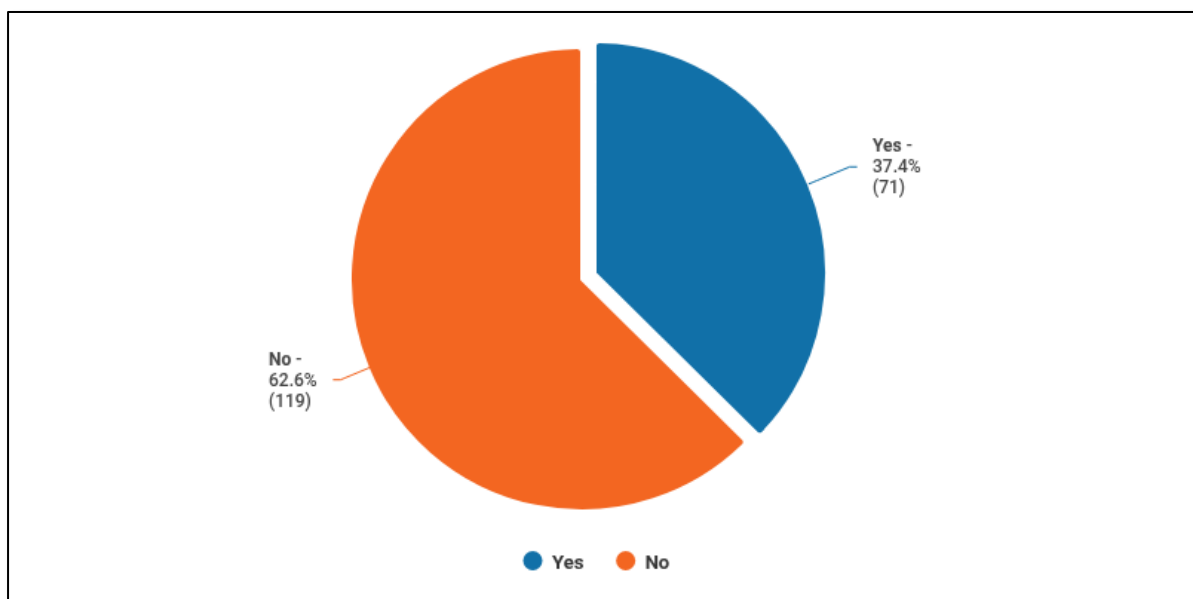
Negative comments included:

- But they never do anything about it.
- She couldn't remember having a visit.
- SU feels nothing changes or gets done – only one takes them seriously.
- The SU raises their concerns all the time. No problem in talking openly. The only issue is that the issues are not resolved.

Have you ever made a complaint about the care service you receive?

Over a third (37%, 71 people) had made a complaint about their care.

Table 12: Have you ever made a complaint about the care service you receive?



Comments about the various complaints raised:

- Just once and all resolved very quickly
- SU realised that money was going missing in his flat following the carer's visit. He contacted "Speak Out" and they helped him to complain to the care company.

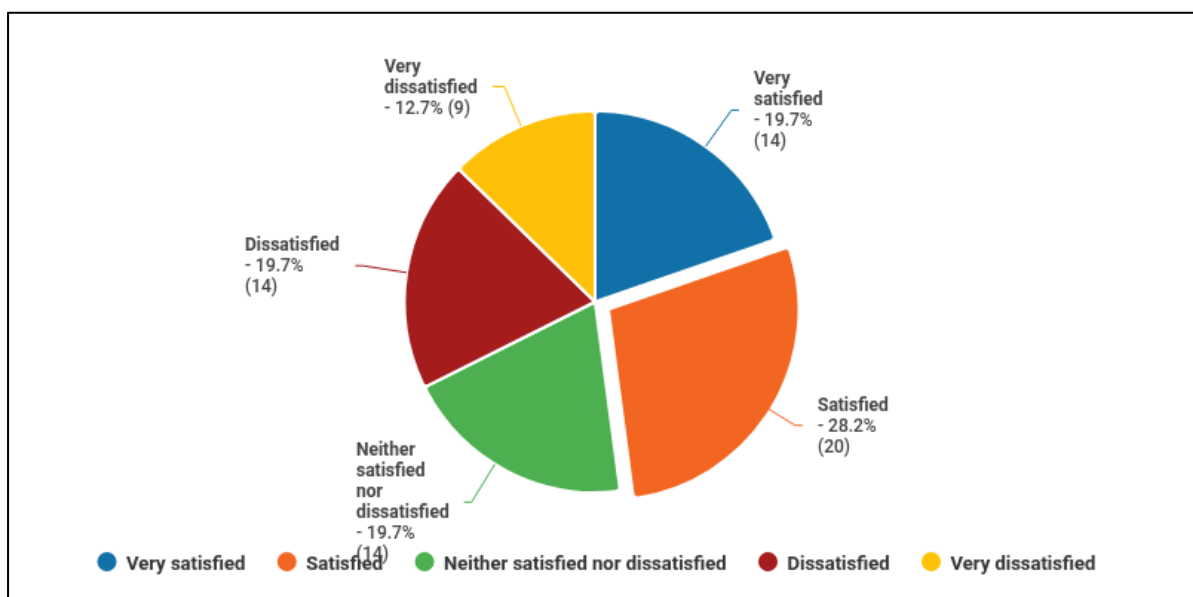
Homecare Check Annual Report 2024–25

- A few months ago, he said that one carer came and really did as little as possible unlike the others.
- He complained that some carers (when they start) are unable to prepare the simplest of foods even though food prep is one of the tasks that the carers undertake.
- Has made multiple complaints.
- Ongoing complaint about unpaid bills for services not requested.
- I complained about them coming too early, and there was one who didn't know what they were doing and I told them.
- Made a complaint about one carer and times of visits at weekend.
- Daughter said that one of the carers wasn't competent and able to carry out the care for her mother.
- Concerns raised when the lever was left open on the catheter bag. The care agency immediately rectified the situation replacing personal clothing items which were damaged.
- She was uncomfortable with one care worker and asked [Provider Name] to send them. They responded immediately.

If you made a complaint, were you happy with how it was handled?

Less than half (48%, 34 people) were satisfied or very satisfied with how their complaint was handled, and just under a third (32%, 23 people) were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

Table 13: If you made a complaint, were you happy with how it was handled?



Homecare Check Annual Report 2024-25

Positive comments included:

- SU said that he had never seen that carer again.
- The issue was addressed rapidly and resolved efficiently.
- The care worker has not visited again.
- The police response was not great, but the care provider did what they could. For example, they removed male care workers permanently from the SU's care plan.

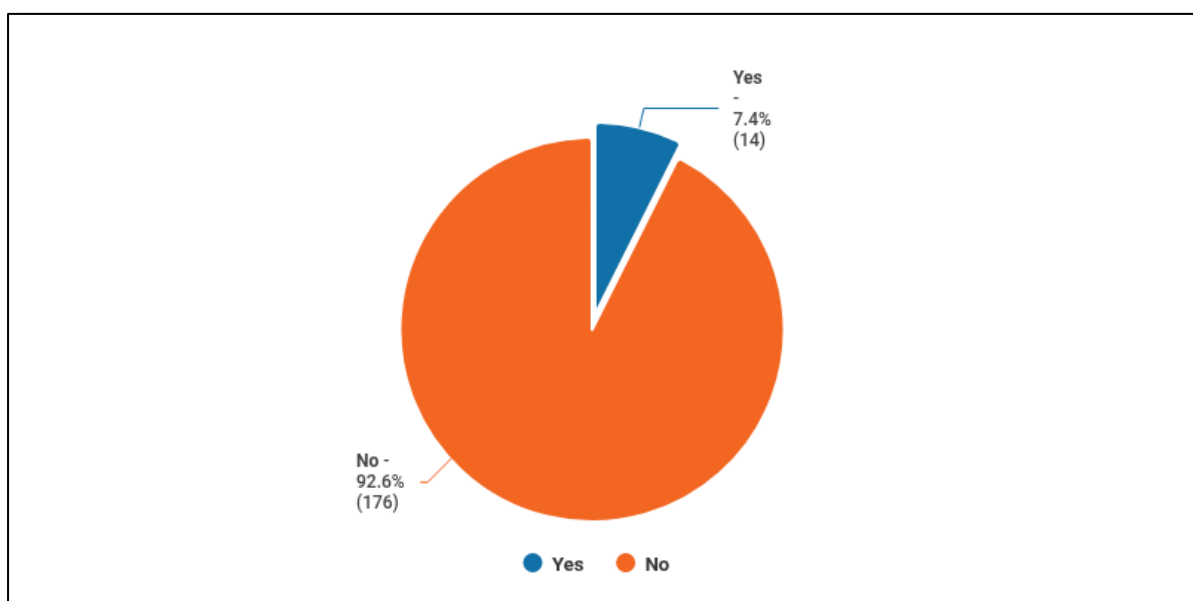
Negative comments included:

- Says that nobody listens to her concerns, and she now feels that she would rather cancel the call and miss her care than have somebody else in her house.
- He said that they listened, but nothing has changed at all. SU thinks that there should be more training for carers.
- Although "had to fight for it".
- Was told it was up to him to manage carers when they are onsite.

In the past year, have you asked your homecare provider for help finding information about support, services, or benefits?

Only a small minority (7%, 14 people) had asked for help in finding information.

Table 14: In the past year, have you asked your homecare provider for help finding information about support, services, or benefits?



Homecare Check Annual Report 2024–25

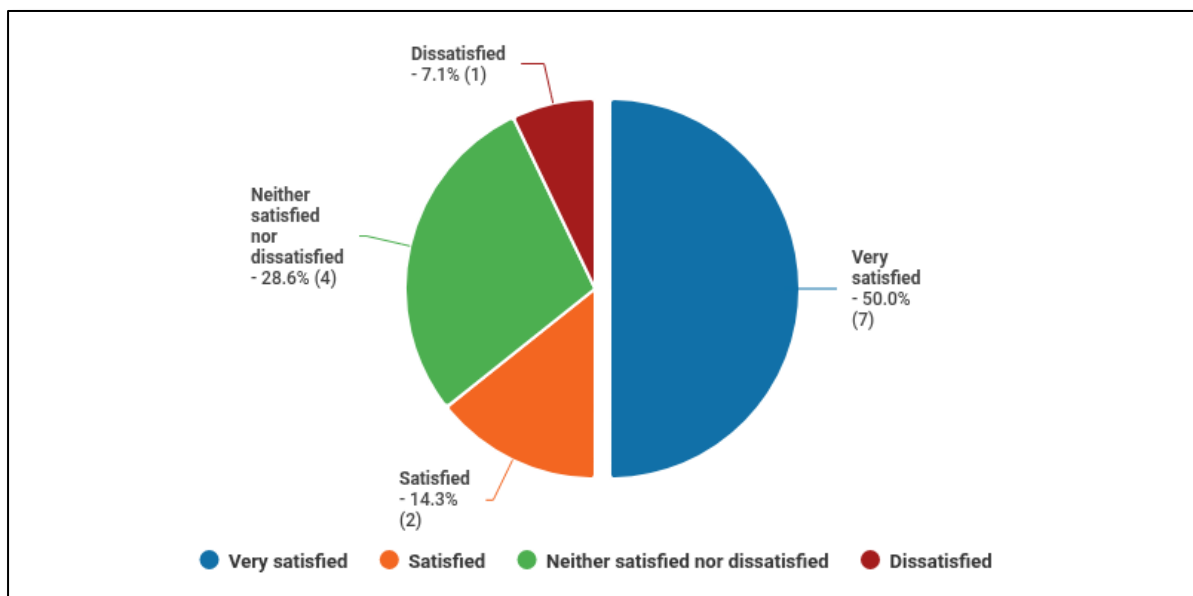
Comments included:

- Has allocated social worker who is trying to arrange additional care.
- Assistance with patient transport services.
- No need as daughter is an experienced carer who is able to help and advise as required.
- SU was not aware that the homecare provider could help with this.
- SU expressed an interest in escorted community-based activities (e.g. local excursions to seaside, cinema visits, etc).
- The care provider has referred the user to agencies helping with memory loss.

If you asked for help, were you happy with the support received?

The majority (63%, 9 people) were satisfied or very satisfied with the support received, though a one person (7%) said they were dissatisfied.

Table 15: If you asked for help, were you happy with the support received?



Comments included:

- Office staff are very knowledgeable about transport logistics and are always very willing to help.
- It appears that SU's most recent issue with obtaining medication has been resolved.

Homecare Check Annual Report 2024-25

- She has not received a response about the therapist and 'has no idea what's going on'. She is very keen to have this support reinstated and has no idea why they stopped coming.
- He is happy that this was acted on and will be starting soon.

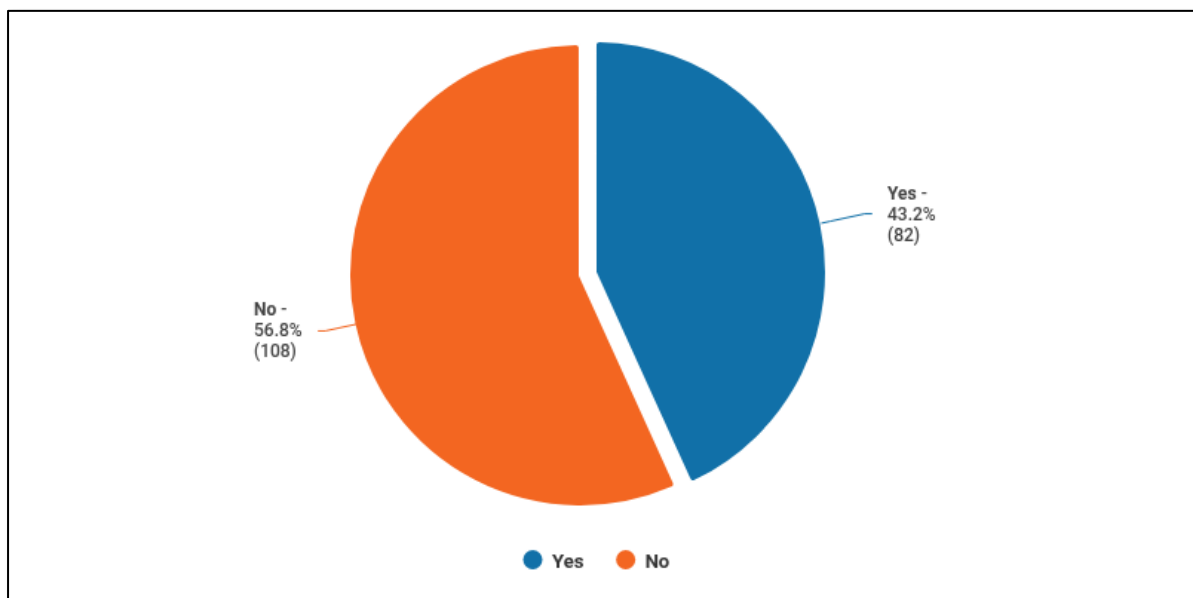
About the Service

Are you informed about when care workers will visit and who they will be?

Note: Do you or family get sent a rota by email or post / get a phone call / your care worker tells you. etc

Less than half (43%, 82 people) said they were kept informed, with the majority responding that they were not kept informed (57%, 109 people).

Table 16@ Are you informed about when care workers will visit and who they will be?



Positive comments included:

- Daughter receives rota by email.
- Receives the rota on a Friday
- Person day before tells me what time person will come next day.
- Carers' team inform SU directly of the timings of their visits and next visits.
- Normally the carer will tell SU if there are any changes, from the usual rota.

Homecare Check Annual Report 2024-25

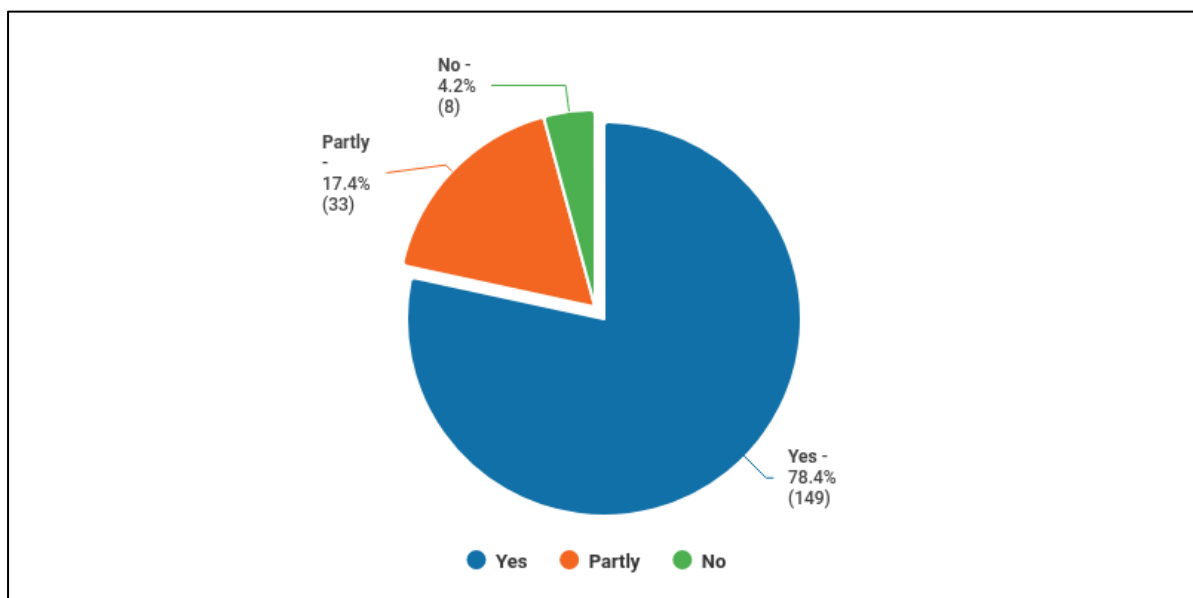
Negative comments included:

- Said no rota received.
- His wife said that you never know who is going to come and a rota would be helpful.
- The rota is a waste of time because quite often the carers are changed by that day and sometimes the times.
- He has a keysafe, so doesn't really know who is coming until they arrive in the house.
- They stopped giving out the paper rota, which was rather useful. It can be quite wearing to be asking for the rota all the time.

Do the times your care workers visit suit you?

Over three-quarters (79%, 149 people) said the scheduled times suited them, with only 8 people saying this was not the case (4%).

Table 17: Do the times your care workers visit suit you?



Positive comments included:

- Happy with time of visit.
- Happy with times and sessions per day.
- Usually on time and never a problem, office is always quick to respond.

Homecare Check Annual Report 2024–25

Mixed comments included:

- Most of time it is fine, but SU said nothing is perfect, so she understood why sometimes the shortfalls are happening.
- The evening visits do but the morning visits are too early.
- Happy with times when they are kept to

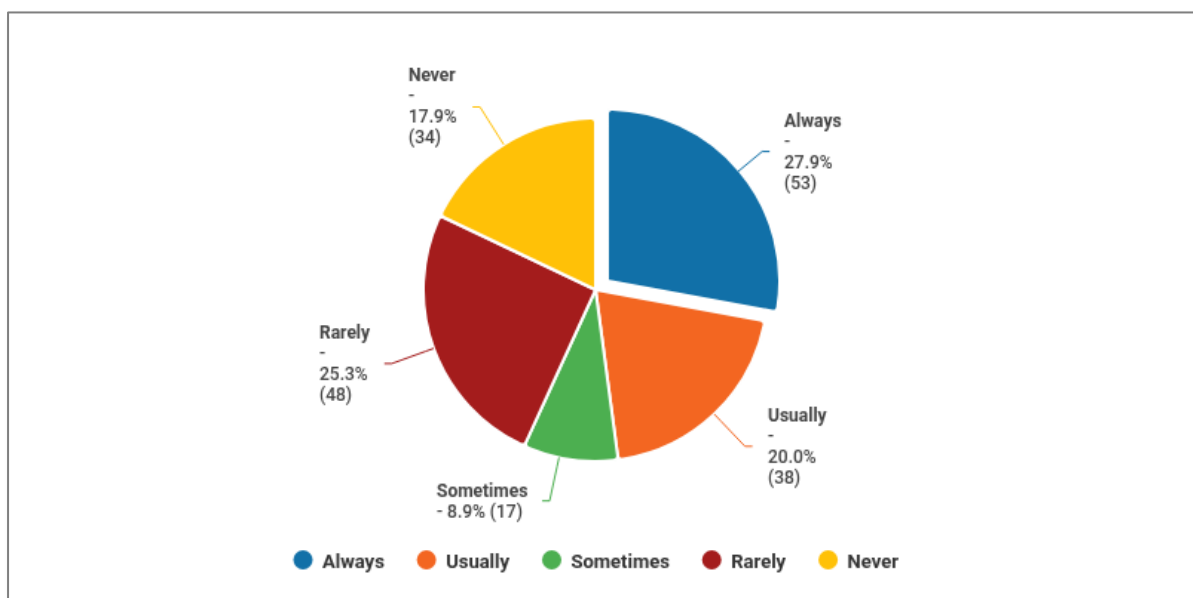
Negative comments included:

- Wife said that they did have an evening call, but it was too late for her husband.
- They would be good if it was the same time as the rota.
- Frequently they come at midday for my breakfast which is far too late!

Does your homecare provider keep you informed when there are changes to your planned care?

Just under half (48%, 91 people) said they were kept informed about changes in their care. And slightly less (43%, 82 people) said they were rarely or never informed of changes.

Table 18: Does your homecare provider keep you informed when there are changes to your planned care?



There was a mix of positive and negative comments to this question, with positive comments including:

- They usually contact SU's son.
- The care manager keeps in regular contact

Homecare Check Annual Report 2024-25

- SU's daughter can login to the careline app and see any changes.
- This information is provided on a day-to-day basis by the care workers themselves about subsequent visits that week.

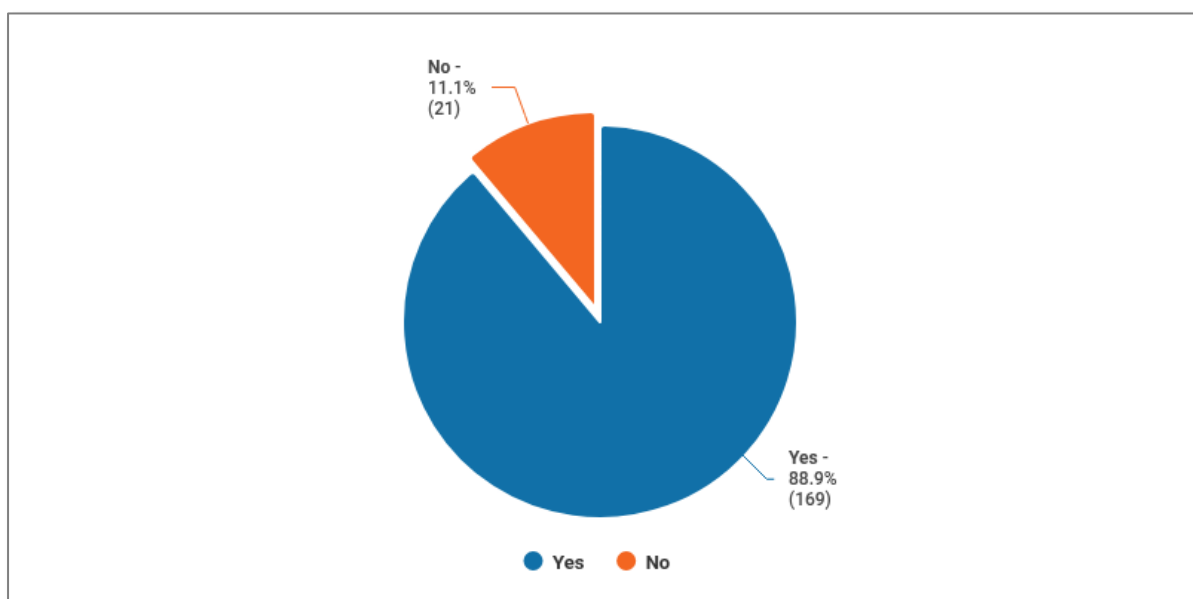
Negative comments included:

- Little contact if running late
- Wife said that there wouldn't be any point in calling to say that the carer had been changed because they didn't know who was coming anyhow.
- It is not consistent enough, and SU feels that she did not get informed enough of changes or tardiness.
- *"Once in a blue moon"*, the SU will be informed about this.

Does the care you receive meet your needs?

The majority (89%, 169 people) felt the care they received met their needs.

Table 19: Does the care you receive meet your needs?



Positive comments included:

- SU and his daughter both stated that they were very satisfied.
- *"She is brilliant they need more people like her"*.
- Unless you could get Mick Jagger for me!
- SU stated that she was *"very happy with the service"*.
- Nothing is ever perfect, of course. But the SU is very glad to be with this care provider.

Homecare Check Annual Report 2024–25

Mixed comments included:

- SU said that the time allocation is fine, but she needs continuity by having the same carer.
- On weekdays but not delivered effectively at weekends.
- The family accepted that they don't expect perfection, but definitely a lot of room for improvement.
- Not 100% satisfied, but she said they have no complaint.
- She mentioned that the care meets her physical needs, but she also has mental health problems which she feels care workers are not trained to support.

Negative comments included:

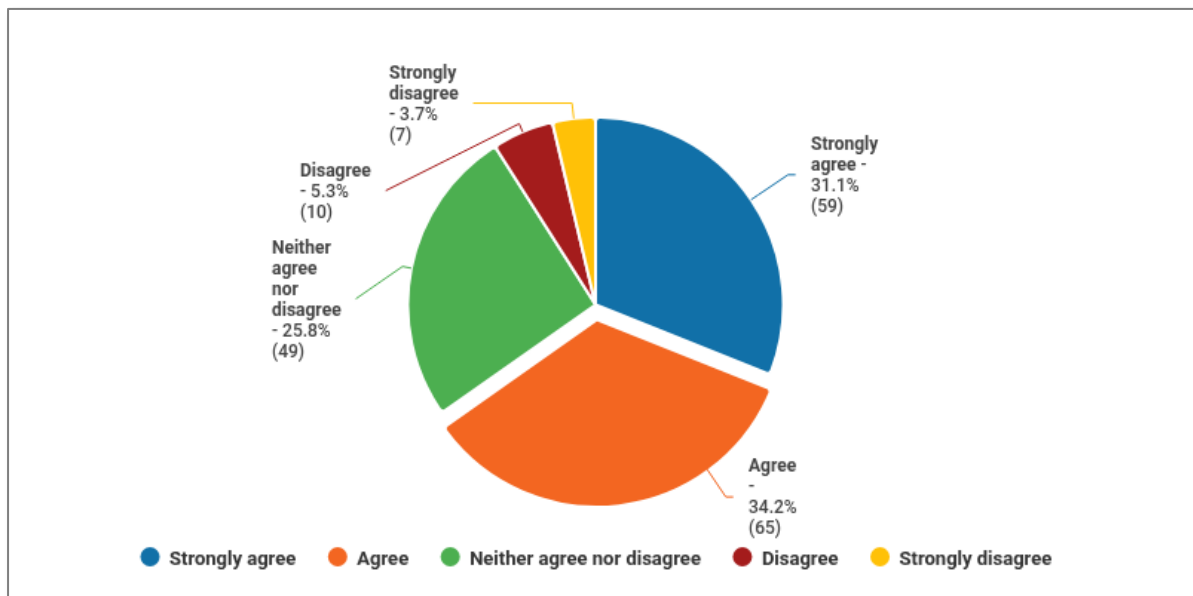
- The issue with carer visits times inconsistency is the principal problem. This can result in SU not having the opportunity to shower or receiving his lunch meal rather late.
- Situation will improve if cleaning programme implemented. Needs care company and carers to be more proactive.
- SU knows she needs help, but she is very disappointed with how things are dealt with. She finds herself calling the office very often only to be fobbed off, as no one person will take responsibility to resolve issues when they arise.
- Not really doing their job.
- The care was needed but could be so much better with better management from the top.

Do you agree that you have choice and control, and that your care provider listens to you, when making decisions about your care?

The majority (65%, 124 people) agree that their wishes are taken into consideration, though a minority (9%, 17 people) disagreed.

Homecare Check Annual Report 2024-25

Table 20: Do you agree that you have choice and control, and that your care provider listens to you, when making decisions about your care?



Positive comments included:

- SU's issues and concerns are dealt with effectively via son's interaction with office staff.
- Daughter says that she talks to the Supervisor about any changes.
- Happy with programme.
- Believes he has the ability to raise things at visits and chat them through.

Negative comments included:

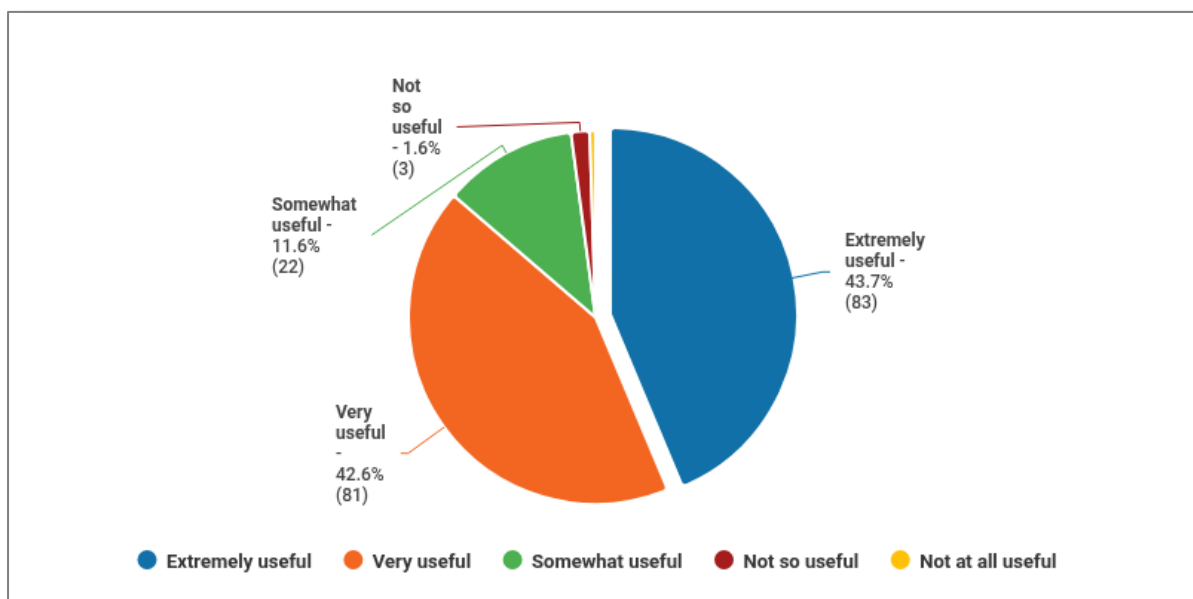
- Happy with care and programme – just wish they would stick with it.
- Feels he has no input or control.
- She said that she couldn't remember being asked.
- Daughter said that she didn't really feel that she was consulted.

Overall, is the help you get from your care provider useful to you?

The majority (86%, 181 people) thought the help they received from their providers was useful to them. Though a minority (5%, 10 people) felt it was not useful.

Homecare Check Annual Report 2024–25

Table 21: Overall, is the help you get from your care provider useful to you?



Positive comments included:

- SU said that without it he couldn't live independently
- SU values the practical help he receives from the homecare team. He also benefits from an enhanced sense of security and wellbeing because he receives such regular visits from the care team, his daughters and extended family
- Wife says that the care is essential for him.
- Daughter says that mum wouldn't be able to manage without the support that she gets.

Mixed comments included:

- Essential care received but inadequate delivery at weekends.
- Quality of care depends upon individual carers
- Still needs to be actively managed by daughter to ensure delivered effectively.
- Some help is better than no help at all, but it is really sub-standard.

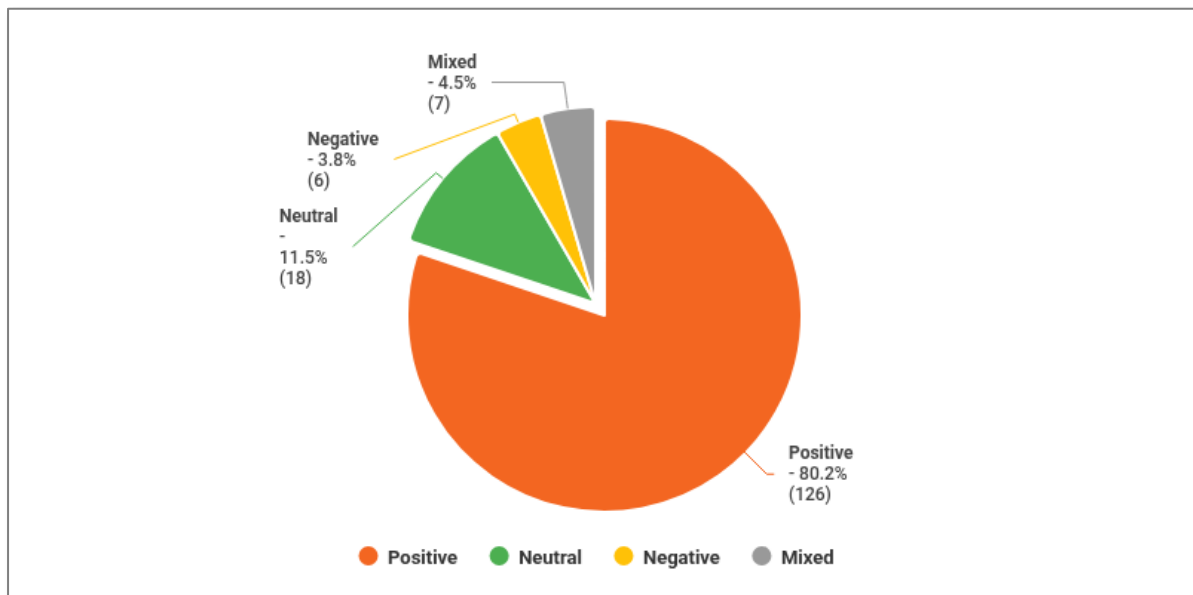
Negative comments included:

- If you get a carer who does what they are supposed to.
- Daughter is considering other providers.
- Tasks aren't done correctly.
- Most leave early.

Homecare Check Annual Report 2024–25

What do you think your homecare provider does well?

Table 22: What do you think your homecare provider does well?



Positive comments included:

- The carers who come are brilliant, and SU is very happy. They are helpful and flexible.
- Carers are all good, they try their best it seems. The office is very quick to act.
- They are attentive and the office has always been very helpful.
- They are all fantastic, the office is always so helpful and can't fault them.

Mixed comments included:

- Described care as "average" and overall happy with that.
- They generally "do what they are required to do". A few of them have a nice chat and laugh with the SU.
- Level of care has improved.
- They do show up, whether or not they do a good job is another matter.

Negative comments included:

- Nothing – the worst agency ever.
- Son couldn't really think of anything and said that he and his brother had been looking for another company.

Homecare Check Annual Report 2024-25

What do you think your homecare provider could do better?

The majority of respondents (60%, 54 people) did not suggest areas of improvements, of those that did the responses were:

Continuity of carers:

- Ensure continuity of carers.
- Give the same carers, not swapping them around all the time.
- More regular carers and right amount of time spent on site.
- it would be better if the same people visited all the time. it changes.

Timing and punctuality:

- Timing of visits to suit SU better.
- Just more consistent with the timings.
- Timing can be off, at times.
- Call times between lunch time / dinner time should be considered.

Timekeeping:

- Arrive on time.
- SU records times when carers arrive each morning – this is not always the same as the time the carer logs in electronically.

Communication:

- Communication with the office, often left not followed up properly.
- She said that a rota should be provided.
- Responding better to concerns of relatives.
- More contact about when carers are visiting and running late if appropriate.

Training, competence and quality

- Ensure carers read and understand tasks required before they go onsite
- Give more training to the staff and teach them what a carer should be doing.
- Language barrier, cultural training, and maybe health and safety.
- Untrained staff and little instruction for new carers. Encourage carers to be more friendly.

Staffing and capacity

- Takes on too many new clients which in turn impacts on level of care to existing clients.

Homecare Check Annual Report 2024-25

- Employ more carers to cope more efficiently with the number of calls that they need to make.
- Tend to overwork their best carers.
- There's nothing they could do better. They could do with more care workers but that is difficult to fix.

Language skills

- Wife said that all carers should be able to speak English.
- Make sure that their carers can actually communicate well in English.
- All carers should be able to speak and understand English.

Care delivery

- SU has to remind them to complete tasks. Carers make SU feel like a number.
- They stated they wanted female only, yet they keep getting males. SU wants to be listened to more.
- Support for mental health issues.
- Provide personal, 'human' interaction and company.

Administrative / financial

- SU said people at the head office who deal with payments are appalling.
- She feels the financial system/invoicing could be improved.

Other

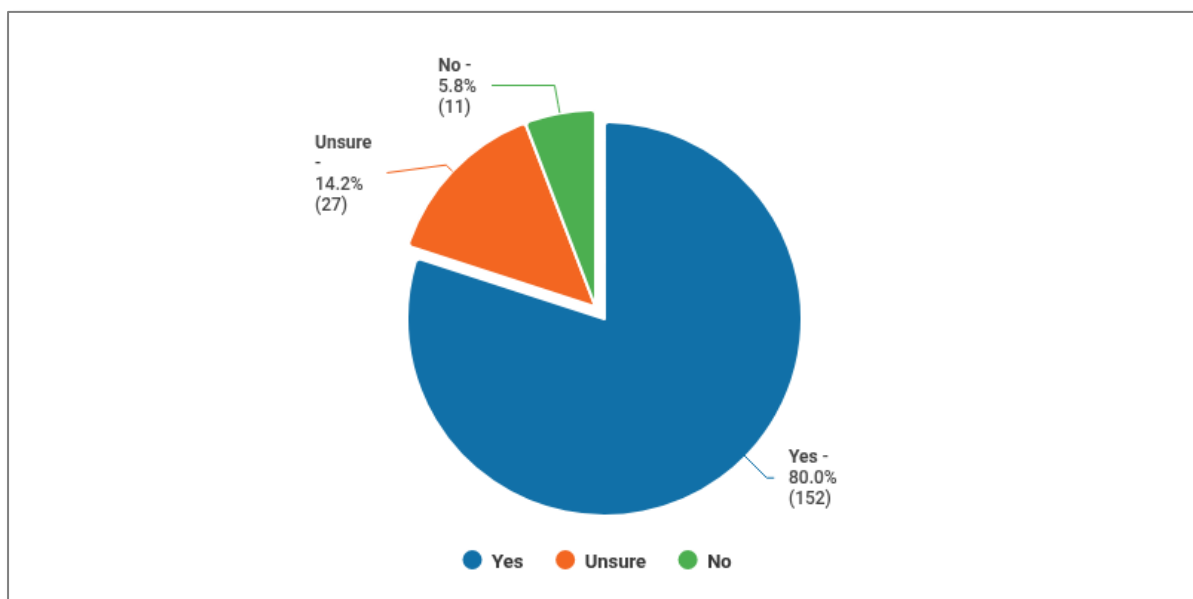
Do you know what to do if you're unhappy with the service?

Note: Volunteers informed service users that if they're not satisfied with the provider's service or their response to any issues raised, they can complain to the council directly by calling 01273 291 229.

More than three quarters (80%, 152 people) said they knew what to do if they were unhappy with the service.

Homecare Check Annual Report 2024-25

Table 23: Do you know what to do if you're unhappy with the service?



Information provided / discussion held:

- Complaints and safeguarding procedures explained.
- Council complaints and safeguarding contact details.
- Family would manage contact with the council.
- Daughters regularly oversee and monitor the care being provided.
- Would speak to the manager / supervisor.

Confidence in raising concerns:

- Already has the relevant booklet and contact numbers.
- Aware of external agencies that could be contacted if required.
- Would contact the police in the event of serious concerns or abuse.

Concerns about the effectiveness of complaints:

- Not convinced complaints lead to change.
- Feels their voice is not always heard when complaints are made.
- Feels complaints are not always taken seriously by the office.

Vulnerability / Reliance on Others:

- Relies on family members to identify and report concerns.
- Uncertain about how to raise concerns independently.

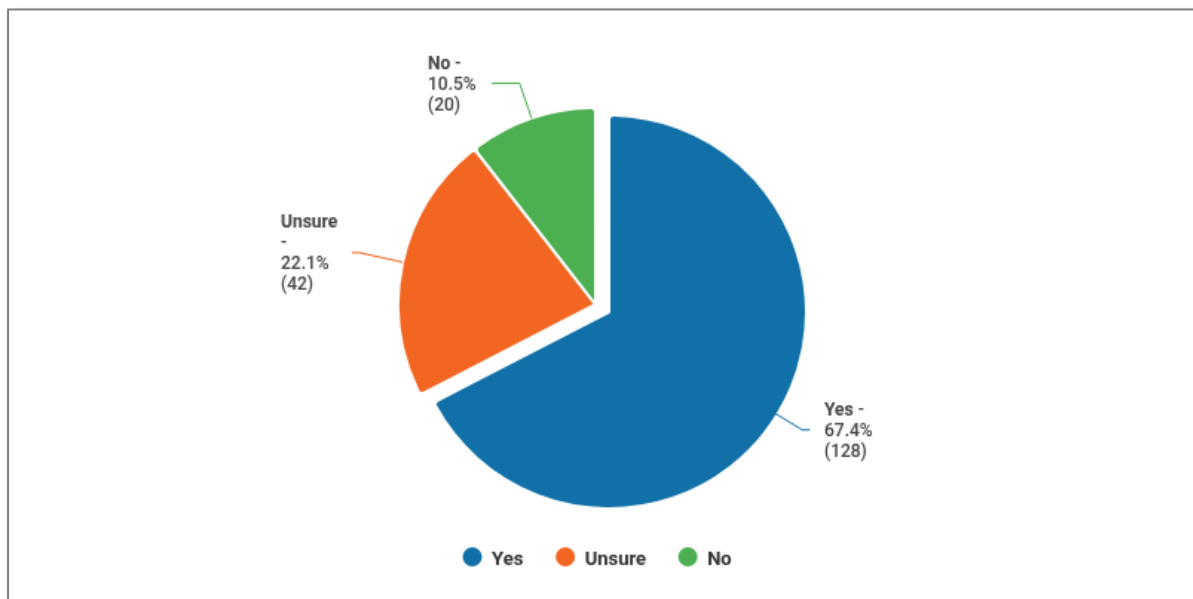
Homecare Check Annual Report 2024-25

Do you know what to do if you think someone is being hurt or harmed?

Note: Volunteers informed service users that if someone they know is at risk of harm, they can call the council safeguarding team on 01273 295 555.

Over two thirds (67%, 128 people) said they knew what to do if someone is being hurt or harmed.

Table 24: Do you know what to do if you think someone is being hurt or harmed?



Information Provided / Discussion Held:

- Left Healthwatch leaflet.
- Discussed the issue and what it means.
- Discussed safeguarding and showed the relevant section in the leaflet.
- Explained Council complaints and safeguarding procedures.

Support from Family / Others

- SU's friend who visits daily monitors the situation carefully.
- SU would ask her son to deal with any concerns.
- Daughters are on hand to oversee the care SU receives.
- SU's wife is confident she could identify signs of harm.
- SU would speak to the manager.

Other

- SU is unlikely to be able to identify or report concerns independently, but NOK/PoA monitors closely.

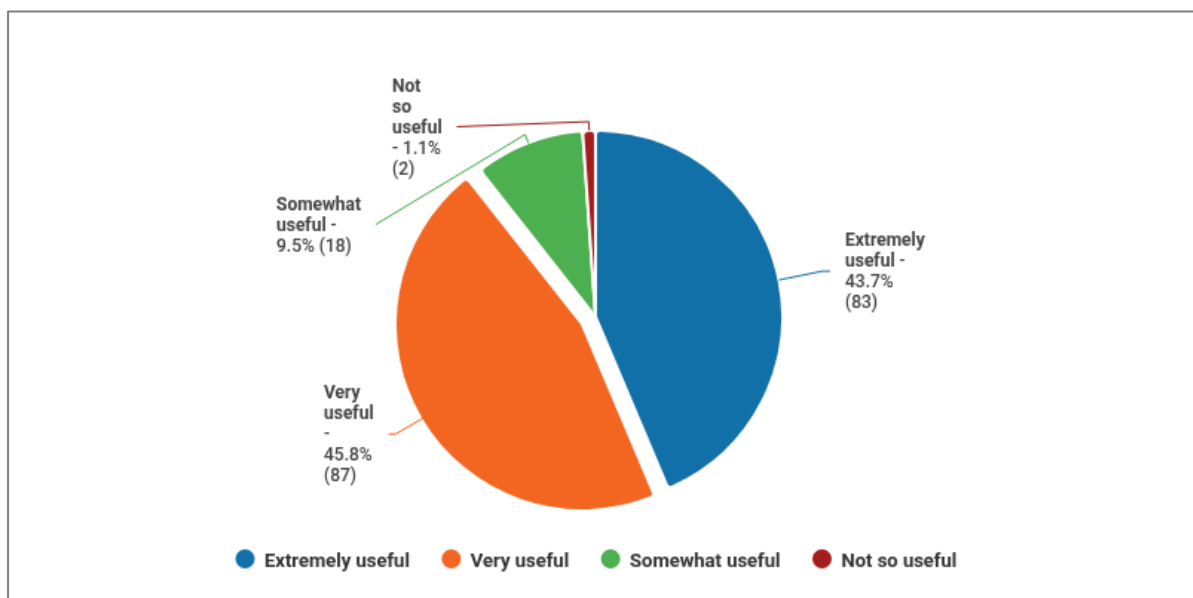
Homecare Check Annual Report 2024–25

- SU seemed uncertain, so was signposted to the BHCC safeguarding team.
- Not sure SU is capable of flagging issues independently.
- In a previous safeguarding matter, the police were contacted.

We use your feedback to check how well homecare providers are doing. Do you think this is a good and useful thing to do?

Nearly all (94%, 198 people) thought collecting their feedback to see how well homecare providers were doing was a good and useful thing to do.

Table 25: We use your feedback to check how well homecare providers are doing. Do you think this is a good and useful thing to do?



Positive comments about the Homecare Check included:

- Thought it was a wonderful idea.
- Good for people to have the opportunity to express their views about care.
- By speaking directly to people receiving care, the Council can gain insight into what is really happening.
- Very helpful as some people are ignored.
- Provided service users' concerns are acted upon.

Positive comments about being contacted included:

- Appreciated the opportunity to discuss care and raise concerns.
- Valued having someone to talk to.
- Was pleased that monitoring and follow-up was taking place.

Homecare Check Annual Report 2024–25

- *"You are the first person in two years to come and ask these questions."*
- One respondent preferred a verbal discussion to written surveys.

'Useful only if action is taken' comments included:

- Could be very useful if actions arising from the review are carried out.
- Only useful if findings are actioned.
- Useful if concerns raised lead to change.
- Useful if providers act on the outcomes.
- Hoped the process would help the provider improve.

Comments on concerns about impact included:

- Had no confidence that the review would result in any change.
- Felt similar surveys had been completed before without improvements being made.
- Hoped things would change but was currently disappointed with the service.
- Thought the check would be more useful for people experiencing difficulties with their care.

Comments on suggestions for improvement included:

- Feedback should also be collected from care workers to inform improvements to training, pay and working conditions.
- Felt the review would have been more useful when they were receiving care from a previous provider.
- Barriers to Engagement
- Found the question difficult to understand.
- Had limited spoken English and was reluctant to be interviewed.

Conclusion and Common themes

Although there can be a variability of service within and across providers, there are a number of common themes.

- Care workers continue to be highly valued by service users. Regular carers were frequently described as kind, professional, caring and reliable. Many service users spoke positively about the relationships they had developed with their carer workers and the role they play in helping them remain independent and safe at home.
- Continuity and consistency of care remain among the most important issues for service users. Whilst most reported seeing the same carers regularly, continuity was one of the most frequently praised aspects of good care and one of the most common areas for improvement where it was lacking. Service users often expressed frustration at having to repeatedly explain their needs and routines to unfamiliar carers. Regular carers were generally rated more highly than cover, weekend or newer staff, with concerns sometimes raised about training, confidence and consistency of care.
- Communication is the area most frequently identified for improvement. Less than half of service users said they were informed about planned changes to their care or about who would be visiting. Common concerns included not receiving rotas, not being informed when carers were running late, and poor communication between office staff, care workers and families.
- Views of office staff and management are more mixed than views of care workers. Whilst many service users described office staff as helpful and supportive, others reported difficulties getting issues resolved, obtaining information, or receiving responses to concerns. This was also reflected in feedback about complaint handling.
- Most service users feel that the care they receive meets their needs and is essential to maintaining their independence. Many commented that they would struggle to manage, remain safe, or continue living at home without the support they receive from their provider.
- Satisfaction with complaints handling remains lower than satisfaction with care provision. Although many service users knew how to raise concerns, several felt that complaints did not always result in meaningful action or lasting improvements.
- Family members play an important role in monitoring and coordinating care. Relatives frequently act as advocates, monitor the quality of care being delivered, raise concerns with providers and support service users who may be unable or unwilling to do so themselves. This highlights the need to ensure that

Homecare Check Annual Report 2024-25

people without family support are equally able to have concerns identified, raised and addressed.

- Service users value being asked about their experiences. Feedback about the Homecare Check process was overwhelmingly positive, with many welcoming the opportunity to share their views and feeling that hearing directly from service users is an important part of monitoring service quality. Several respondents stressed the importance of ensuring that feedback leads to improvements.

Appendix 1 – Leaflet

The Homecare Check Service leaflet which is sent to residents being interviewed, and left with residents when visited.



Figure 1: Homecare Check leaflet – cover

Homecare Check Annual Report 2024-25



Health and care can be difficult to navigate

As part of the Homecare Service, our volunteers talk to people about the quality of their homecare, but as the independent local champion for Health and Social Care, we also want to hear about your experiences of using NHS service such as GPs, dentists and hospitals.

With your feedback, we have the power to make sure NHS leaders and other decision makers listen and improve standards of care.

If you want to have your say



feedback@hwbh.co.uk
hwbh.co.uk/feedback

If you want help or advice



helpline@hwbh.co.uk
hwbh.co.uk/helpline

Or call us on **01273 234 040**

Figure 2: Homecare Check leaflet – Page 2



Community Hub

If you are struggling to pay for food, energy, and other essential costs, or you need welfare or wellbeing information, they can help with advice and support.

01273 293 117 and select option **2**

Adult Social Care

Where to find information on the adult care services provided by the council, including support, payments, and reporting concerns.

brighton-hove.gov.uk/adult-social-care

Adult Social Care Hub

The hub provides a list of all the local organisations and services available in the city.

brighton-hove.gov.uk/adult-social-care-hub/health-and-adult-social-care-directory

Contact the council on **01273 293 117**
accesspoint@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Figure 3: Homecare Check leaflet – Page 3



Ageing Well Service

Ageing Well is a council funded partnership of organisations supporting city residents aged over 50. It is led by Impact Initiatives and includes Together Co, TTB, BHFP, TDC, Switchboard, Citizens Advice, Clare Project, Bridging Change, HKP and others.

Their **Information, Help and Advice Team** can support people 50+ across the city with activities and social groups, information and advice, befriending, and tailored services for people living with dementia.

What support can you get

- Information & Advice
- Dementia Support
- LGBTQ+ Groups
- Multicultural Groups
- Activities – things to do
- Befriending – providing company
- Social Prescribers – helping people to connect
- Connectors – supporting people to groups

Who can apply

Brighton & Hove residents aged 50+

Contact them on **0808 175 3234**
info@ageingwellbh.org

Figure 4: Homecare Check leaflet – Page 4



The Carers Hub

Carers Hub is a partnership of three local charities and city council assessment staff, offering a focal point for supporting unpaid carers.

They aim to improve the quality of life of carers in the city by offering a wide range of services and comprehensive local resources for carers of all ages.

What support can you get

- Information & Advice
- Support for young carers
- Carers assessment
- Carers discount card
- CareLink Plus & Telecare
- Carers Reablement Service
- Dementia Carers Support
- Emergency Back Up Scheme
- Mental Health
- My Health Matters
- Online help

Who can apply

Brighton & Hove residents acting as unpaid carers.

Contact them on **01273 977 000**
info@carershub.co.uk

Figure 5: Homecare Check leaflet – Page 5



Possability People

Possability People run many different projects and services – including grants – to support people with disabilities, giving them access to the right information, with the right support, so they are enabled to make personal choices.

What grants can you get

Grants to make a home safer;
urgent repairs
housing adaptations
deep cleans or de-cluttering
Handy Person Grant for urgent small building repairs

Who can apply

The service is available to disabled city residents or those aged over 65, living in their own home, housing association property or private renting.

Referrals need to be from a health professional.

Contact them on **01273 069851**
hds@possabilitypeople.org.uk

Figure 6 Homecare Check leaflet – Page 6



Mental Health Support

Previously known as Community Roots, **UOK** is a partnership of community services working together to support good mental health in Brighton and Hove and East Sussex.

They can signpost and support you to link you in with services, groups & activities to help improve your well-being.

Contact them on **0808 1961768**
or chat@uok.org.uk

Emergency Support

24/7 Mental Health Crisis Line

Call **NHS 111** and select the mental health option to be connected to the 24/7 mental health crisis line, also known locally as the Sussex Mental Healthline.

Sussex Mental Health Rapid Response Service

This service supports adults experiencing a crisis with their mental health, who think they are at risk of harming themselves or others.

0300 304 0078
Mon-Fri 8am-10pm / Weekends 10am-10pm

Figure 7: Homecare Check leaflet – Page 7

Homecare Check Contacts

Healthwatch Brighton & Hove

If you want to talk to us about your homecare visit, or any other health and social care issues, please call **01273 234 040** or visit hwbh.co.uk for more information

Making a complaint

If you are not satisfied with the quality of service you are getting from your homecare provider, or how they respond to issues you raise, then you can complain to the council directly on **01273 291 229**

Raising a safety concern

If you believe you or someone you know is at risk of harm, then please call the council safeguarding team on **01273 295 555**

Healthwatch would like to thank all of our fantastic volunteers for their support on this project





Figure 8 Homecare Check leaflet – Back

Thank you

Healthwatch Brighton and Hove would like to thank our volunteer Lay Assessors who gave their time to support this work. Without them, this would not be possible.

We would also like to thank the Homecare service users and their family and friends for giving us their time.



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For more information about Healthwatch Brighton and Hove and what we do, visit hwbh.co.uk.