



**Investigating Domiciliary Care
Service Provision in
Redcar and Cleveland
January 2017**

1. WHAT IS HEALTHWATCH?

The Health and Social Care Act (2012) established Local Healthwatch as the new consumer champion for health and social care services for adults and children in England. Healthwatch Redcar and Cleveland's aim is to be a strong, independent, trusted and effective voice and a champion for local people, influencing health and social care delivery and supporting people to access health and social care services. It will strive to ensure the best possible quality and choice in health, social care and wellbeing services for the benefit of all living and working in Redcar and Cleveland.

2. RATIONALE

Healthwatch Redcar and Cleveland initially received a number of comments and concerns from the public regarding domiciliary care provision at a Healthwatch event. Healthwatch responded to this by carrying out further work to gather more information to see if this was an issue that was important to the residents of Redcar and Cleveland. One of the main concerns raised was the lack of training provided to new carers prior to them delivering care to people in their own homes.

At this time, Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council were in the process of recommissioning homecare services and welcomed the opportunity to receive feedback from service users regarding current service provision.

3. WHAT IS DOMICILIARY CARE

Domiciliary care is care provided in an individual's own home, normally of a personal nature such as help with dressing, washing or toileting. It is designed to help people remain independent at home and give them choice and control over how they live. It can be arranged by Social Services following an assessment of need, or can be arranged privately by the individual themselves, or someone acting on their behalf.

4. AIM

To gather feedback of domiciliary care services to identify if they are meeting the needs of service users and highlight any improvements required.

METHODOLOGY

Healthwatch Redcar and Cleveland developed a questionnaire to be completed by individuals who currently receive domiciliary care, their family members or carers. The questionnaire consisted of a number of questions asking people about all aspects of their home care. The questions were focussed around consistency, professionalism, level of service provided and overall quality of care. One of Healthwatch's aims was to identify if carers arrived on time and stayed for the full duration of the allocated time. The questionnaire also asked individuals if the service was meeting their needs and if not, what improvements could be suggested.

To enable Healthwatch to reach as many people as possible who receive domiciliary care services, Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council assisted Healthwatch in arranging a meeting, inviting all the 26 providers of this service.

The providers who attended this meeting and gave support to this project were:

- Careline Homecare
- Allied Healthcare
- Meadowvale Homecare
- Comfort Call
- Caremark
- Carewatch
- Heritage
- Mears

With the help from these listed providers, 1100 questionnaires were sent out to individuals receiving domiciliary care in Redcar and Cleveland. The questionnaires were given to the individuals via their care provider along with a freepost envelope to enable them to return their feedback to Healthwatch. Healthwatch felt this was

the most appropriate method to use in order to gather the views directly from the people receiving care, allowing them, or their family members and carers, to complete the questionnaire in their own time at home.

5. ANYALYSIS OF FINDINGS

A total of 90 questionnaires were completed and returned to Healthwatch, 55% of which were completed by the individual receiving the care and 45% completed by a relative, carer or friend of the service user.

Do the carers stay for the full allocated time?

A total of 95% of service users who completed the questionnaire explained that their carers stay for the full amount of time which has been allocated to them. The 5% of service users who stated that their carers did not stay for as long as they should left comments including:

‘Often the girls leave 10 mins earlier if they have finished and I've had my breakfast and tablets.’

‘Carers leave after 10mins if they can.’

‘Carers never stay for the full 30 minutes so I don't receive the full time allocated.’

Do the service users feel that the time allocated to them is enough for the level of service they require?

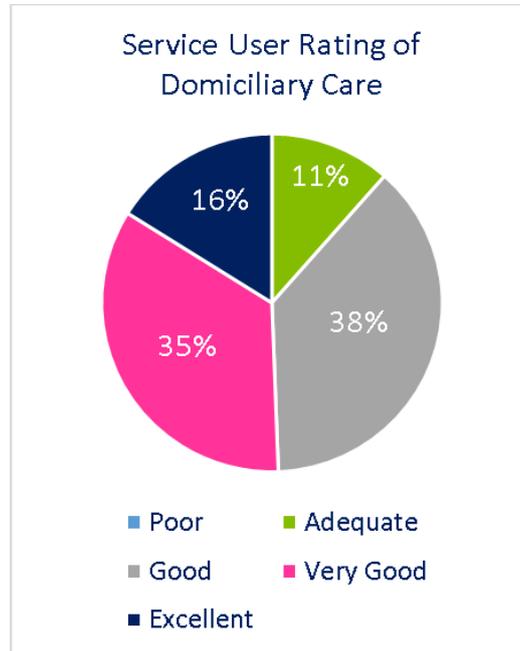
93% of service users felt that they were allocated an adequate amount of time for the level of service they require. The few individuals who felt they required more time with their carers explained:

‘Sometimes they give me a shower but they go over their time but most of the time they haven't got the time to give me one so I go a couple of weeks without one and that is not right, I feel dirty.’

‘If I'm feeling poorly or tired they rush me a bit.’

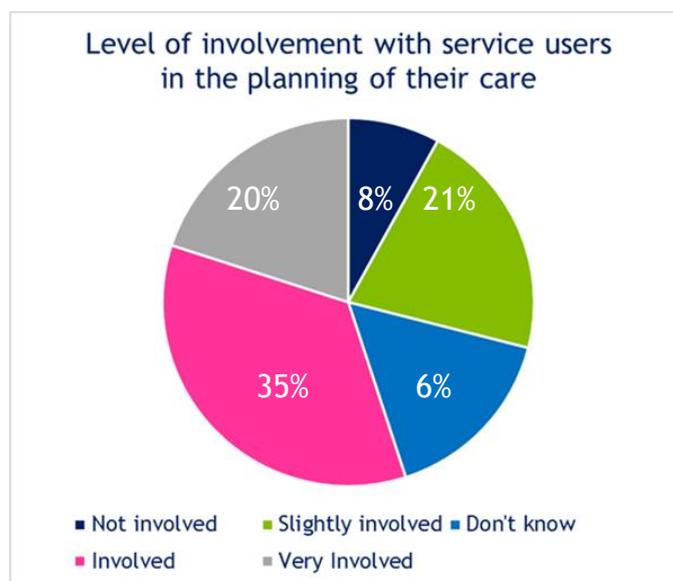
‘I'm always rushed, especially on a morning. I wish the girls had more time.’

How suitable is the service to the individual's needs?



The majority of service users (88%) felt that their care is currently meeting their individual needs and gave their service providers a rating of 'good', 'very good' or 'excellent'. Only 11% of individuals found their care to be 'adequate' no one rated their care as 'poor'.

How involved were the service users in the planning of their care?



Service user involvement is valued as an integral aspect of service planning and delivery. It is important that the views of individuals who are receiving the care are obtained, taken into account and acted upon by those providing the service. Individuals who completed the questionnaire gave varying responses when asked if they were involved in the planning of their care with 55% saying they were ‘involved’ or ‘very involved’ and 29% saying they were only slightly involved or not involved at all.

How do individuals feel the service could be improved?

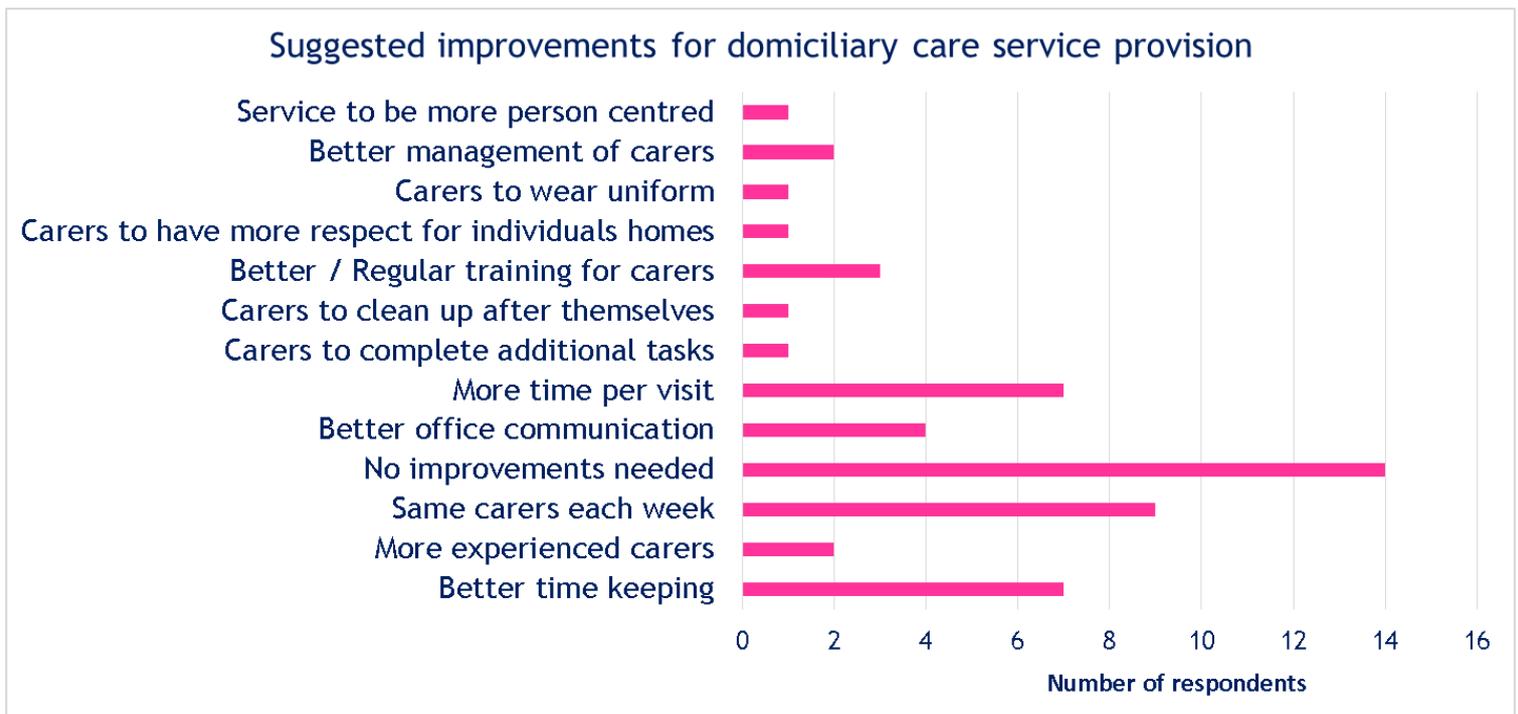
The majority (66%) of individuals who completed this question were happy with the service they were currently receiving and felt that no improvements were needed.

‘There is no improvement needed, all excellent.’

‘Cannot be improved, very satisfied.’

‘Happy with the service at present.’

However 33% of people who completed the survey thought that some improvements were necessary and a summary of their suggestions are listed in the table below.



Individuals felt that having better continuity of carers was one of the most important aspects of their care which needs addressing.

'I would like the same carer each week. I am scared of change.'

'I am fed up of getting new carers who don't know where things are.'

'I get different ones (carers) almost every day and don't like it.'

'We had two regular carers attend, we now seem to have a stream of different carers.'

In addition to this, a significant number of service users expressed that they felt the carers often arrived late and that the carers needed to be more punctual for each visit.

'Better time keeping.'

'Girls not being late all the time.'

'Arrive on time for call.'

'Carers are sometimes a bit late, especially on a weekend.'

Time constraints per visit were also raised as a problem with service users and that more time was needed for each visit in order to complete all the tasks required.

'Wish they had more time, always rushing about.'

'By giving me more time to have a shower.'

'The carers feel rushed.'

Additional improvement suggestions included better training provided to the carers and having more experienced carers for those requiring a higher level of care. It was also felt that each carer should be assessed on a regular basis to ensure they are meeting the service users' needs. Older, more experienced carers are often preferred over new, young carers due to having a better knowledge and skill level for the role.

'Carers should be allocated to clients according to their skill level and level of care required by the client.'

‘Younger carers need more training. Would like them to go out with a senior carer and have more in house training.’

‘Training plans and refresher training for all carers.’

‘Supervisors / managers need to assess carers by carrying out inspections and speaking with client / client representatives.’

‘New carers that have absolutely no idea what they are doing because they have been thrown in at the deep end.’

Communication between the office, management and clients was also highlighted as an issue for a number of individuals receiving care. It is felt that office staff do not understand the role of the carers and the time it takes for the carers to complete different tasks, causing problems when scheduling the time and duration of visits.

‘Care providers should be reviewing their system used by office staff to plan care visits and make improvements where possible.’

‘After constantly being promised by the administrator that they will sort this issue, the rotas are never improved.’

Additional feedback was received with regards to general housekeeping and respect for people’s homes. Service users felt that although the carers were completing the tasks required, they tend not to tidy up after themselves and put items back where they belong. Individuals feel that they should treat their belongings and home with more care at times and to be more person centred, understanding each of their individuals likes and dislikes.

‘Let down with... not all things are put back in place.’

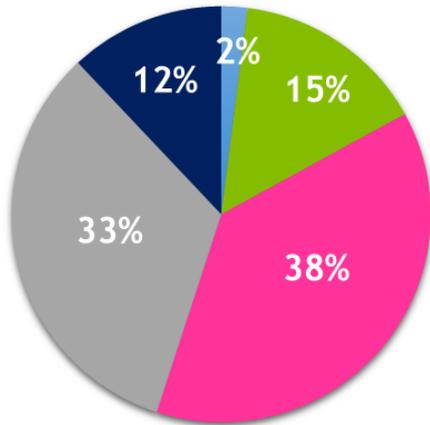
‘Clients shouldn’t have to keep an eye on the carers to make sure that they are doing their jobs correctly.’

‘They [carers] treat people’s homes without respect and as if it’s just somewhere they HAVE to be.’

‘Have to leave notes and remind [them] what to do.’

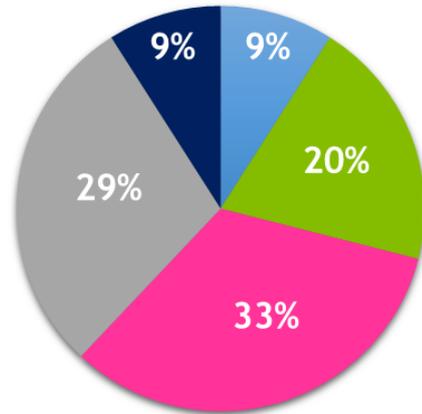
Service users level of satisfaction

The amount of time my carers have to do everything that is required of them



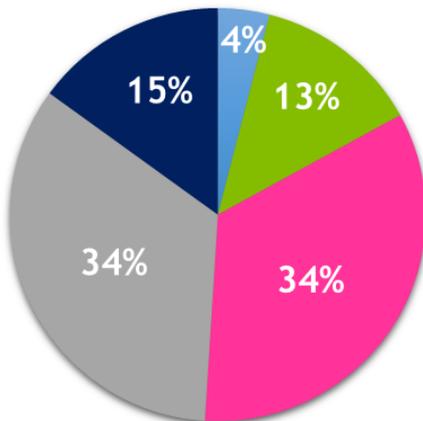
■ Poor ■ Ok
■ Good ■ Very Good
■ Excellent

My carers arriving at their designated time



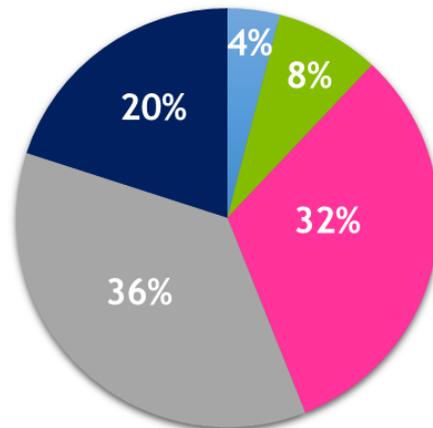
■ Poor ■ Ok
■ Good ■ Very Good
■ Excellent

My carer's competence & professionalism



■ Poor ■ Ok
■ Good ■ Very Good
■ Excellent

My carer's caring & considerate behaviour



■ Poor ■ Ok
■ Good ■ Very Good
■ Excellent

Overall the level of service user satisfaction for the above aspects of care was very good. The category 'Carers arriving at their designated time' had the lowest score (71%) in ratings of good, very good and excellent. The highest scoring in these ratings (88%) was in the category 'My carer's caring and considerate behaviour'.

Additional comments made by service users:

'Some are very good, some not. Just doing the job.'

'Not sure some carers are trained or competent.'

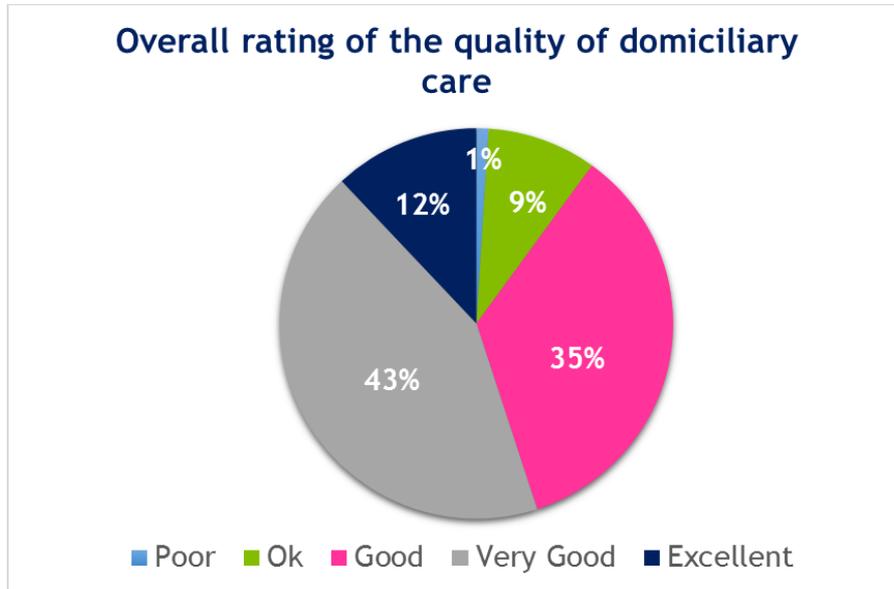
'One in particular will go above and beyond to help.'

'The carers my mother has are wonderful -professional but extremely caring. They go out of their way to help and support her.'

Who pays for the domiciliary care?

When service users were asked if they contributed towards the cost of their care, 59% of individuals who completed the questionnaire said that they did make payment for their own care entirely or contributing in part with the Local Authority, while 29% of individuals did not pay towards their care and 12% were unsure whether they did or not.

Overall rating of the quality of domiciliary care



Ninety percent of individuals who completed the questionnaire rated the overall quality of the care they receive as 'good', 'very good' or 'excellent'. A number of service users explained that the care they received was of a good standard and as a result has had positive effects on their overall quality of life. A number of positive comments were received with regards to service provision and in particular the carers who provide the domiciliary care.

'I feel safe.'

'The carers are very friendly and helpful.'

'I couldn't do without them, lovely girls.'

'Some of the carers are brilliant.'

'Excellent carers.'

'We are extremely happy with the service.'

'[They] have been great in assisting Mum plan her life and increase confidence after her stroke.'

'These 8 hours a week of carers is very essential to me and give me the only free time I have.'

8. CLIENT EXPERIENCE

In addition to distributing the questionnaire, Healthwatch Redcar and Cleveland had the opportunity to visit domiciliary care clients in their own home. This allowed Healthwatch to gain a better understanding of the service from the client's point of view and find out what was really important to them.

Healthwatch spoke to a lady who has been receiving care from her current provider for approximately one year. The client had previously been with another provider but changed as she wasn't happy with certain aspects of the service. One of the main reasons for changing was that she used to have a lot of different carers visit her which she was uncomfortable with. With this previous care provider, if she wanted to be sent a rota to know who was coming, she had to provide stamped self-addressed envelopes in advance for the provider to post this to her. In addition to this, carers also failed to turn up on a few occasions, one of which was Christmas Eve without any notification.

Since changing providers she is much happier with the service she is receiving. The new provider has allocated her two dedicated carers and sent her photos to identify each carer which can be located in her personal file. She does have some different carers from time to time but is notified if there is any change to her rota. She is now very happy with her new carers who she thinks are 'all lovely'. They make her feel very comfortable, especially since she has some personal care needs which before had made her feel embarrassed. The carers encourage her to do as much as possible. She receives information from her care provider on local activities and groups she may wish to attend which she finds useful.

Another client Healthwatch spoke to was a lady who also had been dissatisfied with a previous provider. She explained how the carers 'didn't talk to you, the young ones are not so good, they need to have more experience'. Since changing providers she is much happier as it's 'nice to have the same carer'. The lady gave

very positive feedback about her carer saying that she was ‘one in a million, she is a wonderful carer’.

Over time this carer has built up a good relationship with this lady which has resulted in some very positive experiences for her. As she is unable go out alone, the carer escorts her on shopping trips, using the time allocated to visit different places and find places the client would be interested in going to which she greatly enjoys. The carer also found out that this lady had an interest in farming and arranged through the care provider for her to attend Country shows throughout the summer by being flexible on her care package. The carer has also put her in touch with another client and now they have lunch together regularly and have become firm friends.

9. CONCLUSION

The overall feedback received from service users of domiciliary care was found to be very positive with 88% of service users rating their care as ‘good’, ‘very good’, or ‘excellent’. The comments and suggestions that people provided on the survey also highlighted what people value most about their care and have identified areas where improvements can be made.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

Healthwatch Redcar and Cleveland would like to make the following recommendations to further enhance service user experience of domiciliary care.

1. According to the survey, one of the most important factors effecting service user experience is continuity of care. Healthwatch recommend that domiciliary care providers should ensure service users see the same carer or carers whenever possible. Feedback received has found that this would lead to improved trusting relationships, a sense of routine and an overall better experience.

2. It is important to service users that their carers arrive on time for their visit and that enough time is provided to complete all tasks required. Healthwatch recommend that domiciliary care providers plan to improve time keeping and reduce time constraints imposed on carers. Putting in place realistic rota provision to allow carers to travel between clients within an expected time frame will ensure that each service user receives the full amount of care they require.
3. Another priority for service users is that their carer is confident in carrying out their duties. It is recommended therefore that domiciliary care providers ensure that staff are fully trained and have relevant knowledge and experience of the tasks they are required to carry out. In addition to this, following mandatory training, it is recommended that carers are monitored and assessed in the initial stages to ensure they are meeting the service user's needs. Providers should also seek regular feedback from service users to ensure the service is meeting their needs.
4. According to the survey only 55% of service users stated that they were involved in their care. In order for people to get the most out of their care it is important that a person centred approach be adopted. Healthwatch recommend that domiciliary care providers involve the service users in every aspect of the planning of their care to ensure that their needs are met.

11. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Healthwatch Redcar and Cleveland would like to thank all the service users, carers and family members who completed the questionnaire and gave feedback about their domiciliary care service provision. In addition to this, Healthwatch Redcar and Cleveland would like to thank the Care Providers who supported with the distribution of questionnaires to their service users.