



Better Lives: Reviewing experiences of social care reviews and reassessments

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Finally, Healthwatch Ealing would like to especially thank the **128 participants** who were kind enough to take the time to share their experiences with us.

Executive Summary

Your Voice in Health and Social Care and Healthwatch Ealing are delighted to publish this report detailing the findings and feedback from service users and carers on their experience of social care reviews and reassessments, as carried out under a new framework, provided by the *Future Ealing* and *Better Lives* approach and philosophy.

Future Ealing and *Better Lives* seeks to improve support to residents in need, focusing on helping them to stay well and be as independent and active as they can be. Carrying out social work visits and assessments within this context involves having meaningful and rounded conversations with service users, involving their families and carers and linking them to local activities and community groups that can offer support and friendship, help reduce isolation and improve health and wellbeing.

During April-August 2019 Healthwatch Ealing staff and volunteers contacted 475 individuals who had received a social work assessment or review within the last 12-month period. Service users and carers were asked a series of questions rating to what extent they agreed or disagreed with a series of questions about the social care review/reassessment they had received. During the period 128 individuals completed the survey over the telephone, a 26% response rate. We spoke with both service users themselves and many carers, where this was more appropriate. Individuals who indicated a preferred language other than English were accommodated by our staff and volunteers with additional languages - there were a small number of instances where this was not possible.

The results in the main were very positive. There was a large overall satisfaction with the service they received through the visit. People knew when and why the social worker was going to visit and they felt treated with dignity and respect during the process and visit. People felt able to talk about what they wanted help with, the best ways of supporting them, and that the support received from family, friends and other people was an important part of the discussion. People were satisfied with the discussion they had with the social worker and felt they were receiving the right amount of support to be able to do the things that they needed help with.

Areas, where more mixed feedback or higher ratios of negative feedback were received, were in relation to questions around involvement in planning support; encouragement given to local services and activities that would help them to feel safe, active and independent; clarity around next steps and what to expect, including provision of contact details; and the ease to which service users could find information about what is going on in the local community.

Given the aims of *Future Ealing* and *Better Lives* and the desire to help individuals develop greater independence, the largest area for progress appears to be the potential to be gained from finding efficient ways to keep residents up to date and informed about what is going on in their local communities. Additionally, much is to be gained in going beyond this, taking it one step further to assist individuals, their carers and families to make the connection, take the initial steps, attend and participate in local groups and activities and build the support and social networks that can really build resilient and vibrant communities and impact on the health and wellbeing of everyone living within them.

The findings are discussed in more detail in the main body of the report, which is complete with recommendations and areas of good practice.

1.0 Introduction

Healthwatch Ealing is an independent organisation that gives people a voice to improve and shape services and help them get the best out of health and social care services.

In our capacity as a local Healthwatch, the London Borough of Ealing (LBE) approached Healthwatch to ask for support in reviewing social work reviews and reassessments taken place under the Better Lives work programme.

Healthwatch Ealing carried out a review during April - August 2019, undertaking telephone surveys with 128 individuals (both service users and carers).

The individuals we spoke with ranged in age, gender, ethnicity and disability. The services users were disabled physically or mentally, having Dementia, learning disabilities and other long term and life limiting health and social care conditions and needs. Over 60% of those we spoke with were aged over 75 years.

The information presented within this report reflects the individual experience of those we spoke to. Healthwatch Ealing presents this as information to be considered and utilized to improve service provision and highlight areas of good practice.

Future Ealing

The councils approach to delivering on the priorities for the borough and its residents. It is a radical approach to transforming the way that the council delivers local services to ensure their sustainability into the future and to focus our efforts and resources where they can have the most positive impact. At the heart of Future Ealing are three priorities to address the key issues for Ealing: Good, genuinely affordable homes; opportunities and living incomes; and a healthy, great place.¹

Better Lives: Adult Social Care in Ealing

The Better Lives programme introduces a new way of working to improve outcomes for residents, and to address demographic and economic pressures.

This fresh approach will ensure individuals are empowered to be independent and are made aware of how their strengths can help them maintain this independence. To achieve this, we believe it is important to work closely with community service providers and other professionals, including Ealing Hospital and local GPs.²

Better Lives is a long term cultural and transformational change Based on strength based approaches and opportunities to influence demand. It includes

- Changing the way we deliver Adult Social Care - the “Ealing Way”
- Cultural and behaviour change programme for in-house staff and external providers
- Improving outcomes and experience for residents
- Addresses demographic pressures, increasing demand (hospital discharge, deprivation of liberty)
- Addresses financial challenges including inflation pressures (national living wage, market supply)³

¹ <https://ealing.cmis.uk.com/ealing/...>

² <https://www.ealingsocialcare.jobs/adults-services/>

³ <https://www.ealingleadership.com/...>

2.0 Aims & Objectives

The aim of this project was to obtain the feedback from the people who had been using the services and had received a recent social care review or assessment (within the last 12 months).

Objectives:

- Obtain service user and carer feedback on social care reviews/assessments
- Make recommendations to the social services to improve the service

3.0 Methodology

A draft survey was provided by local authority colleagues for use in this research project. The survey was independently reviewed by Healthwatch Ealing staff, YVHSC research team and the Healthwatch Ealing Committee, which consists of local residents experienced in social care and supporting communities. Several amendments were made, and additional questions included. There were 14 questions excluding the monitoring information questions. Please see the appendix for a copy of the survey used.

The overall methodological approach was to carry out telephone surveys with Ealing residents who had recent experience of a social care review or assessment (within the past 12 months).

A contact list of 475 individuals who had received a visit within the last 12 months was provided by the Local Authority.

Telephone interviews were carried out by a group of trained Interns, experienced volunteers and Healthwatch Ealing staff. Staff and volunteers with additional languages were able to carry out some interviews with service users who spoke another language.

We spoke with service users directly and with several carers where it was not possible to speak with the service user. In cases where service users were hard of hearing some surveys were posted so that they could be completed and returned.

Where we were unable to reach people in the first instance, we attempted up to four times.

The data collection took place over a period of 5 months, **from April to Aug 2019**.

4.0 Limitations

There were a number of individuals who we spoke with, but were unable to carry out telephone interviews with. This was down to a number of factors including where people were hard of hearing and or where their condition was of a nature that affected communication, understanding or memory. In these instances, where possible, we spoke with family member carers. Those we were unable to speak with could be some of the most vulnerable.

In analysing the responses and comments people made it is apparent that there was confusion with regards to which visit we were seeking views on - individuals often receive regular visits from health and care staff including most commonly, personal/home care agencies. Despite our attempts to ensure understanding at the beginning of the conversation, some of the comments people have provided clearly refer to the quality of carers, rather than the quality of the review/reassessment. Where this is particularly apparent, we have referred to it in the main body of the report. These comments, whilst not directly relevant to this research report, provide insight and information into the quality of personal/home care services that people are receiving in the borough of Ealing.

In pursuing this project we spoke with staff from Ealing Specialist Advice Service. They highlighted that they had seen spikes in calls to their service when social care reassessments had taken place, particularly from those, who had received reductions in their support provision as a result. Whilst the survey did not ask people about whether their package of support had changed as a result, question 9 (I received the right amount of support to be able to do the things that I needed help with) goes some way towards indicating satisfaction around levels of support.

This report contains feedback from the 128 people we spoke with. The views and experiences of the remaining 347 individuals may present a different picture.

Anomalous Responses

Throughout the survey, we received a proportion of 'other' responses, which includes those where people declined to answer the question, and where people could not recall the experience due to the period of time that had elapsed since the visit.

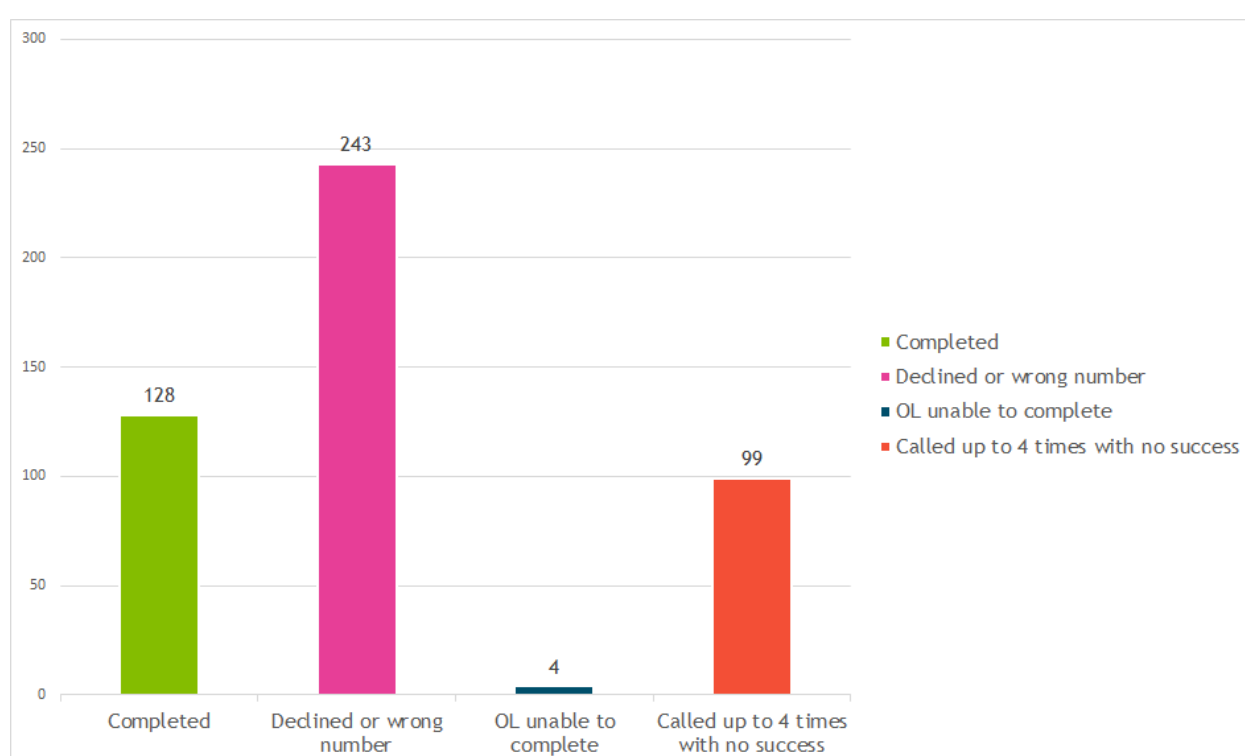
5.0 Results

Healthwatch Ealing approached a total of 475 service users over a period of 5 months.

A total of 128 surveys were completed.

The study achieved a 27% response rate overall.

Call outcomes:



- 128 surveys completed over the phone
- 243 declined/refused to partake in the study or were a wrong number
- 99 called up to 4 times with no success in getting through
- 4 spoke other languages (OL) and could not complete the questionnaire
- 1129 calls made in total
- Approximately 173 volunteer hours spent completing surveys over the phone
- 4 people had surveys posted to them
- 11% of calls were completed in the other languages.

Report Layout:

The report is laid out taking each survey question in turn and includes both qualitative and quantitative analysis of the survey responses for each question. The key findings are included beneath each chart and example comments and themes, in relation to those comments, are included where appropriate. Where comments have been included these have been grouped into 'positive' and 'negative'.

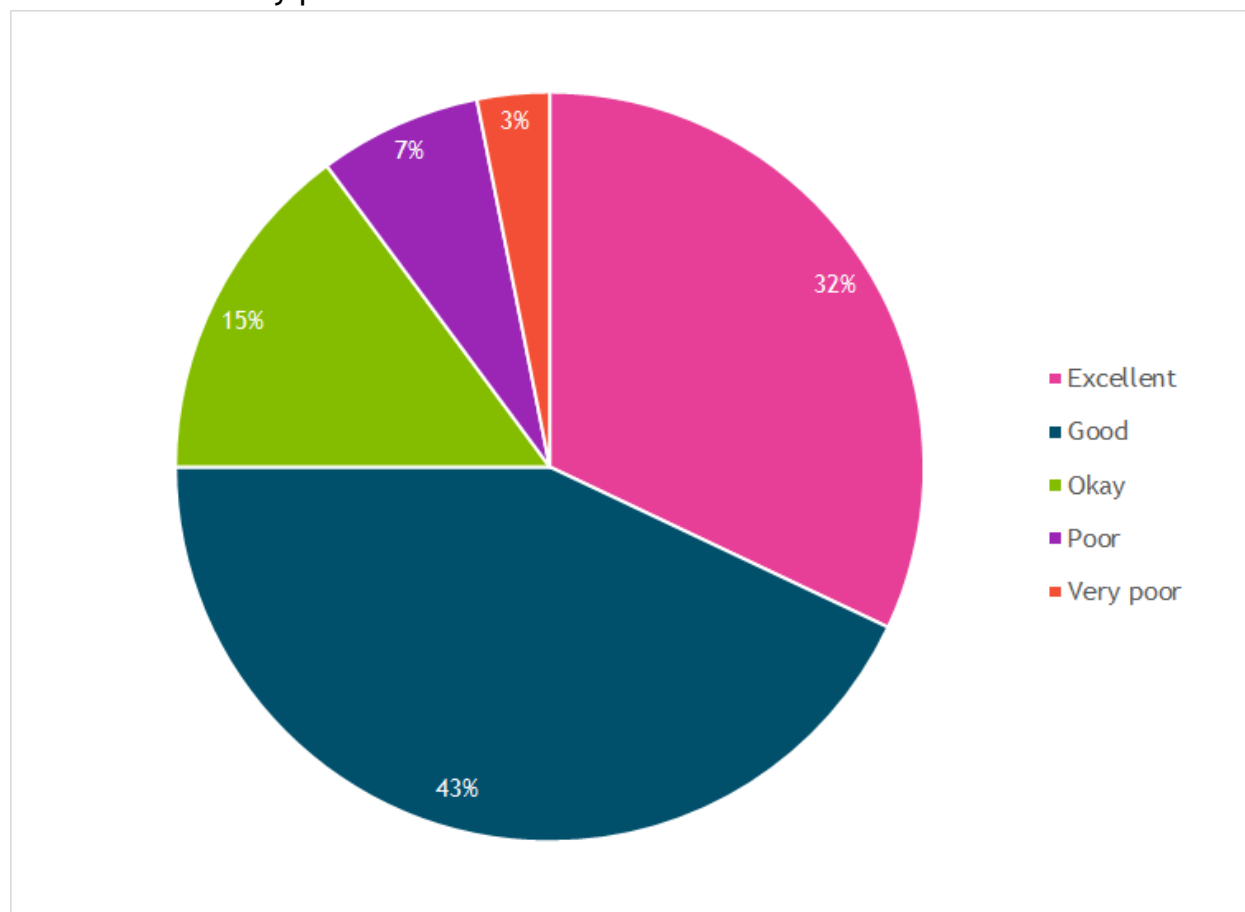
The sample size varies throughout the report depending on the number of responses of each question. It is noted that particularly high level of variation in the sample size for questions 6 & 11 as these questions asked about the community activities.

The overall conclusion can be found towards the end of the report, complete with recommendations for improvements and areas of good practice/elements worthy of praise.

6.0 Overall Satisfaction

Q. We understand that you were recently visited by a social worker who talked to you about the services and support available to help you. How do you rate your overall experience of this service?

Service users were asked to rate the overall experience of the service from 'excellent' to 'very poor'.



Key Findings:

In total 75% of service users gave positive feedback.

Service users reported being happy and satisfied with the visits. Some felt very comfortable and pleased during the visits highlighting that the social workers were very cooperative and understanding. Many people spoke about staff attitude in a very positive way. Service users appreciated social services for putting their needs at the forefront and considering their requests regarding language and extending the number of hours of carer help.

10% of service users reported more negatively on their overall experience. In these instances, they highlighted that the social care worker did not give enough time for them to explain their health condition(s) and the help they were looking for. Some people felt they needed extra help and that they were not receiving the right amount of help currently. These people spoke more negatively about staff attitude.

Below is the feedback given by the service users. It has been categorised into 'Positive' and 'Negative'.

Positive

- ☺ *The visit was excellent and very comfortable.*
- ☺ *They listen and explain everything very well, very nice person.*
- ☺ *Very good, seems reliable and honest.*
- ☺ *They were helpful and listened to me very patiently.*
- ☺ *She seemed like a nice lady, kind and answered all my queries regarding the help for my support.*
- ☺ *Carers are fantastic and overall service is very good and helpful.*
- ☺ *Very valuable, could not have done many things without the help of social services.*
- ☺ *Social services are good at keeping me updated and chasing other people whom I need. They are very patient as well.*
- ☺ *I have low mobility due to my condition, but the social worker has done a great job taking care of me during meetings and visits. I wish there was more communication on where I would be living and located. Not much work was done otherwise to help outside of it, but it has been quite good service otherwise.*
- ☺ *It was really very nice they understand our needs.*
- ☺ *The social worker was very sensible and makes the visit pleasant.*
- ☺ *He gave him the space and time he needed as well as great dignity and respect. [Carer/Relative]*
- ☺ *Had a lovely experience felt very comfortable because the social worker came with the translator which was helpful.*

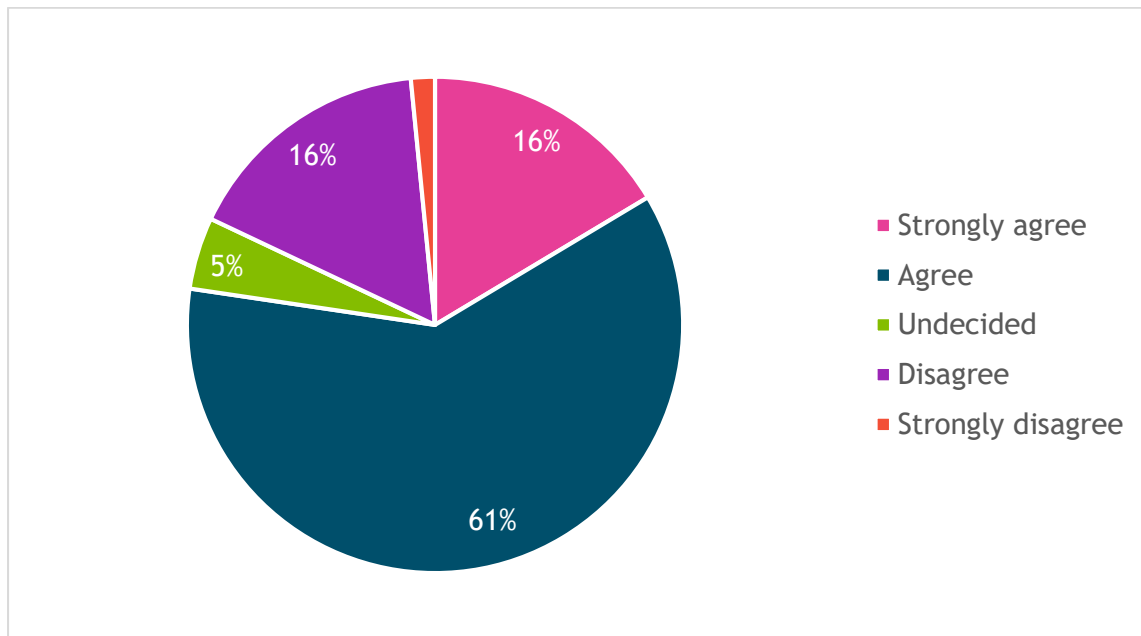
Negative

- ☹ *Very unhappy because carers are careless about his health. [Carer/Relative]*
- ☹ *Has had an interaction with social care worker but the carers always keep on changing and it's difficult to deal with a different one every time.*

- *Good visit but feels you must do everything by yourself. X has special needs and someone to help all the time. Dad is working and would need some extra support. [Carer/Relative]*
- *Unhappy, Nurse manhandled while putting back on wheelchair.*
- *Patient has severe disabilities both physically & mentally (learning disabilities). The initial care of the worker was fine but very little effort was taken to ensure that the information from meetings was properly executed. [Carer/Relative]*
- *Not satisfied with the discussion had with the social care worker.*
- *Need someone to take me to the doctor, I have tried many times to contact the social worker but not successful.*
- *They are good but are not able to help me with the financial issues which I am going through.*
- *Need more transparency with their visits.*
- *Was in hospital for a long time, moved home, social workers do not provide enough time and care, are not helpful, only come in the evening.*
- *Asked more help and doctor's visit but still didn't receive any response from them.*
- *It was okay, the visit was very short, couldn't get much time for discussion.*
- *The visit was disappointing. The social worker is not clear about the helps and support is available for me.*

7.0 Analysis of the questionnaire responses

Q1. I knew when the social worker was due to visit me.



Key Findings:

Over 3/4 of people reported being aware of when the social worker was due to visit. 77% strongly agreed and agreed with the statement and confirmed that they were informed before the visits through emails and phone calls. 5% of people were undecided as they did not remember as the visit was a long time ago.

18% of users spoke negatively about the knowledge of the visits. These individuals reported they got disturbed from their normal schedule when the visits were unknown, as well as highlighting difficulties for them in informing their main carers. The service users strongly opposed the unexpected visits and requested for information prior to the visit.

Below is the feedback given by the service users. It has been categorised into 'Positive' and 'Negative'.

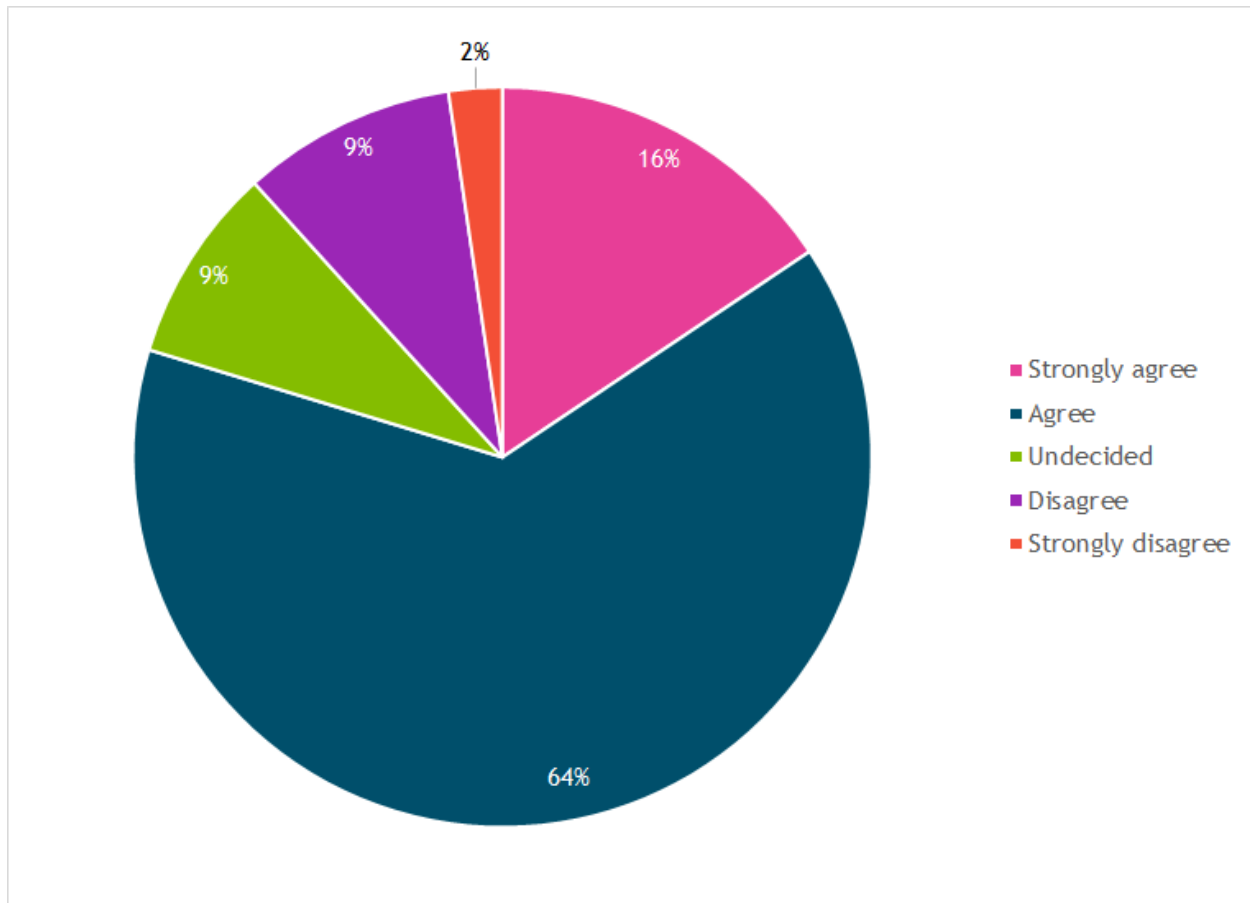
Positive

- ☺ *They arrange the appointment at the most convenient time. I always receive appointment reminders.*
- ☺ *Always keep me informed.*
- ☺ *They are always available and always call before the visit.*
- ☺ *Appointment was arranged by phone.*
- ☺ *They arrived immediately as soon as they rang me up. So, don't need to wait.*
- ☺ *It was scheduled in the meeting earlier.*
- ☺ *They booked my appointment and confirmed the visit date and time over phone.*

Negative

- ☹ *No information about her visit.*
- ☹ *Not sure if there was a call before the visit. Because it's been a long time.*
- ☹ *They don't really inform about their visits.*
- ☹ *Social workers kept changing the times, which is annoying.*
- ☹ *Has understanding problems.*
- ☹ *There is no prior information about the visit. They did not inform me anything which is disturbing a lot.*
- ☹ *Sometimes it's difficult when you are not aware about the visit and you are occupied with something else and they suddenly drop at your place.*

Q2. I knew why the social worker had arranged to visit me.



Key Findings:

A total of 80% of service users responded positively and knew why the social worker had arranged to visit.

Many of the service users appreciated social workers explanation about the visit and the activities available for them in the community.

11% users disagreed and responded negatively. Service users highlighted issues such as the Social worker being in a hurry, coming and going without proper assessment and explanation about services and needs. A few individuals highlighted they were not sent a carer with the language requested/needed. Service users with hearing and learning

difficulties reported asking for special arrangements for better communication and that these requests went unheard or ignored.

Below is the feedback given by the service users. It has been categorised into 'Positive' and 'Negative'.

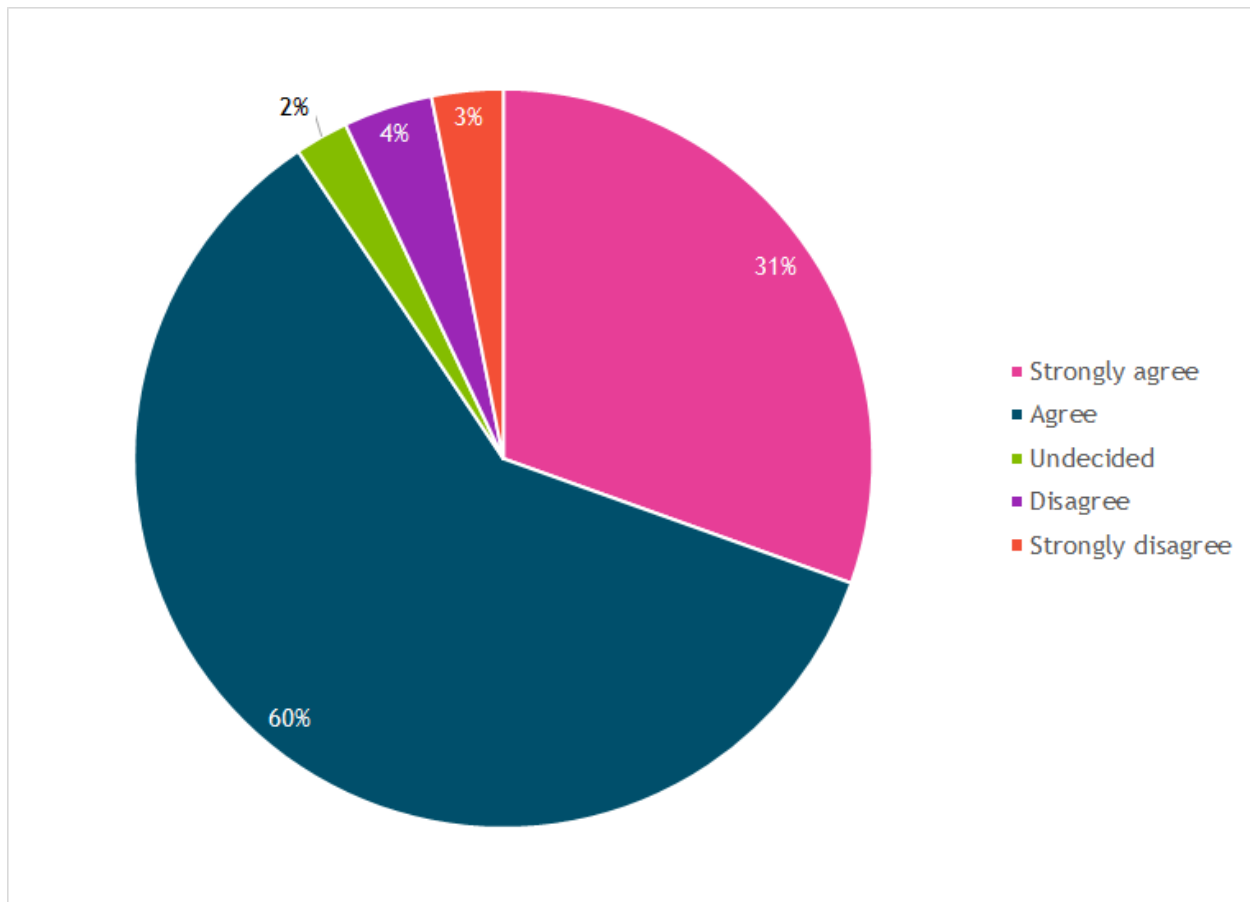
Positive

- *Explained very well.*
- *There was a call about 1 week before as usual to discuss about the next visit.*
- *Explain all the services required very patiently.*
- *Informed very well about the reason of visit.*
- *Aware of reasons since I had booked the assessment.*
- *I was quite aware of the visit so did not discuss much about it.*
- *The social worker gave the brief idea about the visit.*
- *Explained everything very patiently.*

Negative

- *Not sure if there was a call before the visit.*
- *Has understanding problems.*
- *They never visited me, my doctor said he would send them an email they still didn't visit me.*
- *All discussed during the call but didn't explain during the visit.*
- *Sometimes there is some miscommunication since the social worker speak different accent which I couldn't understand.*
- *No explanation at all the social worker was in a hurry.*
- *I have a hearing problem and the social worker had no idea how to communicate with me, a bit strange since they are aware of my health condition.*

Q3. The social worker treated me with dignity and respect.



Key Findings

91% of service users responded positively. Out of the complete survey, this question received the largest percentage of positive responses. It is quite interesting to note that this question has received 31% of strongly agreed responses which is the highest among all the other questions.

People providing this response highlighted being treated with dignity and respect, spoke positively about social workers attitude, behavior, support, and professionalism. Besides, they highlighted friendliness, listening patiently and giving plenty of time for discussions, factors overall making the visits comfortable experiences.

Those that responded negatively are the 7% service users to this question highlighted negative attitudes and being unhappy with social worker behavior towards them. Some of the users spoke about receiving bad treatment from the social workers and of nurses

being ill-mannered and manhandling patients. Some people reported being unable to understand their accents and languages they speak. Social workers were reported seeming to be in a hurry and impatient.

Below is the feedback given by the service users. It has been categorised into 'Positive' and 'Negative'.

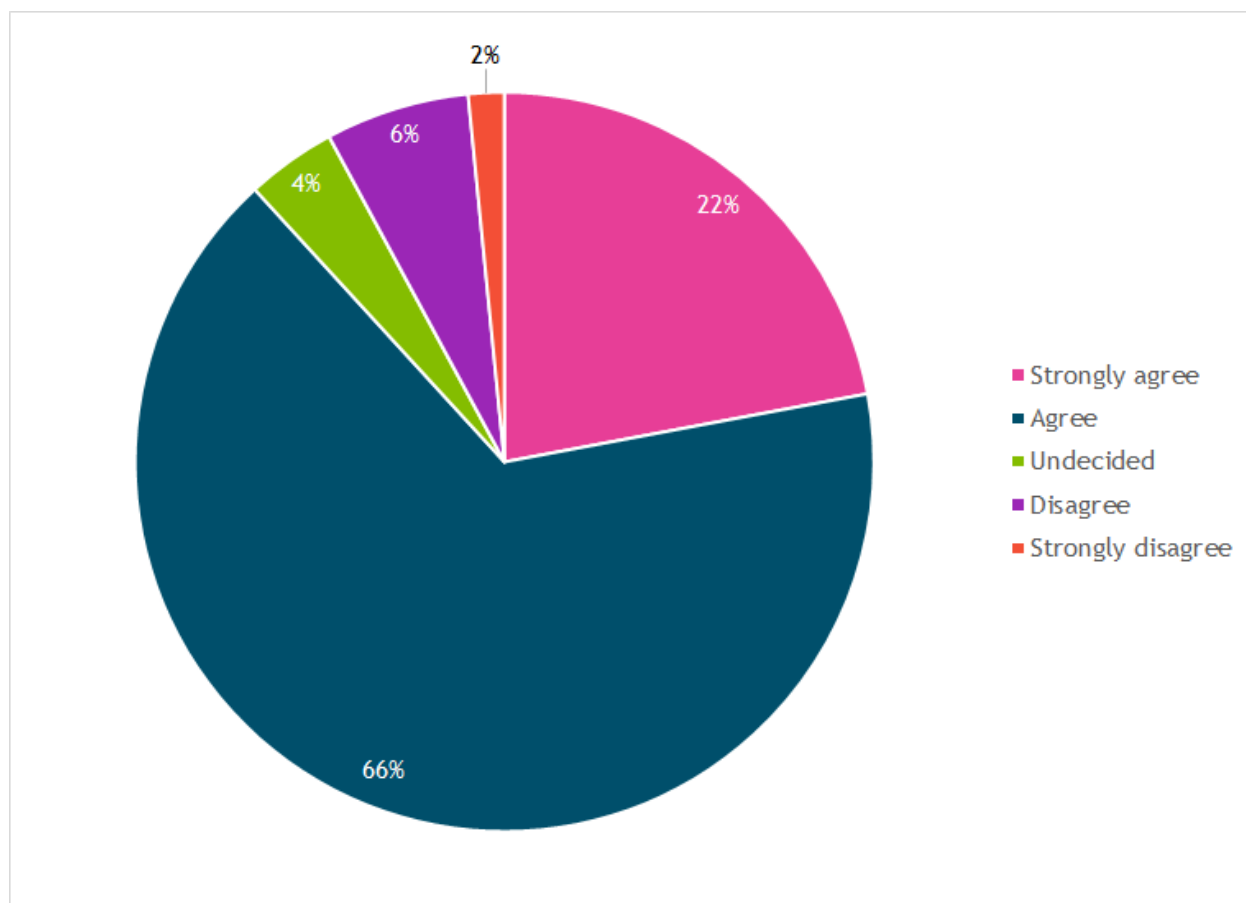
Positive

- *Treated with dignity and respect.*
- *Social worker talks and listened very patiently. Responded respectfully and friendly.*
- *Polite and helpful.*
- *A lot of dignity and respect.*
- *Very friendly and professional.*
- *Treated very nicely and he was very cooperative.*
- *The social worker was very patient and helpful.*
- *Listened to me very patiently when I was explaining about my health condition.*

Negative:

- *Social worker didn't listen and didn't do anything to support.*
- *Did not treat me very nicely.*
- *Not everyone behaves well.*
- *They are ill mannered they have no respect for elderly people.*

Q4. I was able to talk about what I wanted help with and the best ways of supporting me.



Key Findings

88% of service users responded positively to this question. Also, this question has received the highest percentage of agreed responses which is 66%.

People highlighted speaking openly about their requirements and concerns they had. A few individuals were very happy to have a carer who spoke the same language. Family members also got the opportunity to talk about the help and support that they were looking for their relatives. It was reported that social workers were very helpful, patient and attentive and agreed to provide all sorts of help, responding fully to the service user's requirement.

8% of individuals responded negatively. These service users were not happy with the discussions they had with the social worker because the help and support agreed was later not provided and sometimes denied. A lack of professionalism was highlighted as well as social workers not listening and being unaware of services available to provide help and support.

Below is the feedback given by the service users. It has been categorised into 'Positive' and 'Negative'.

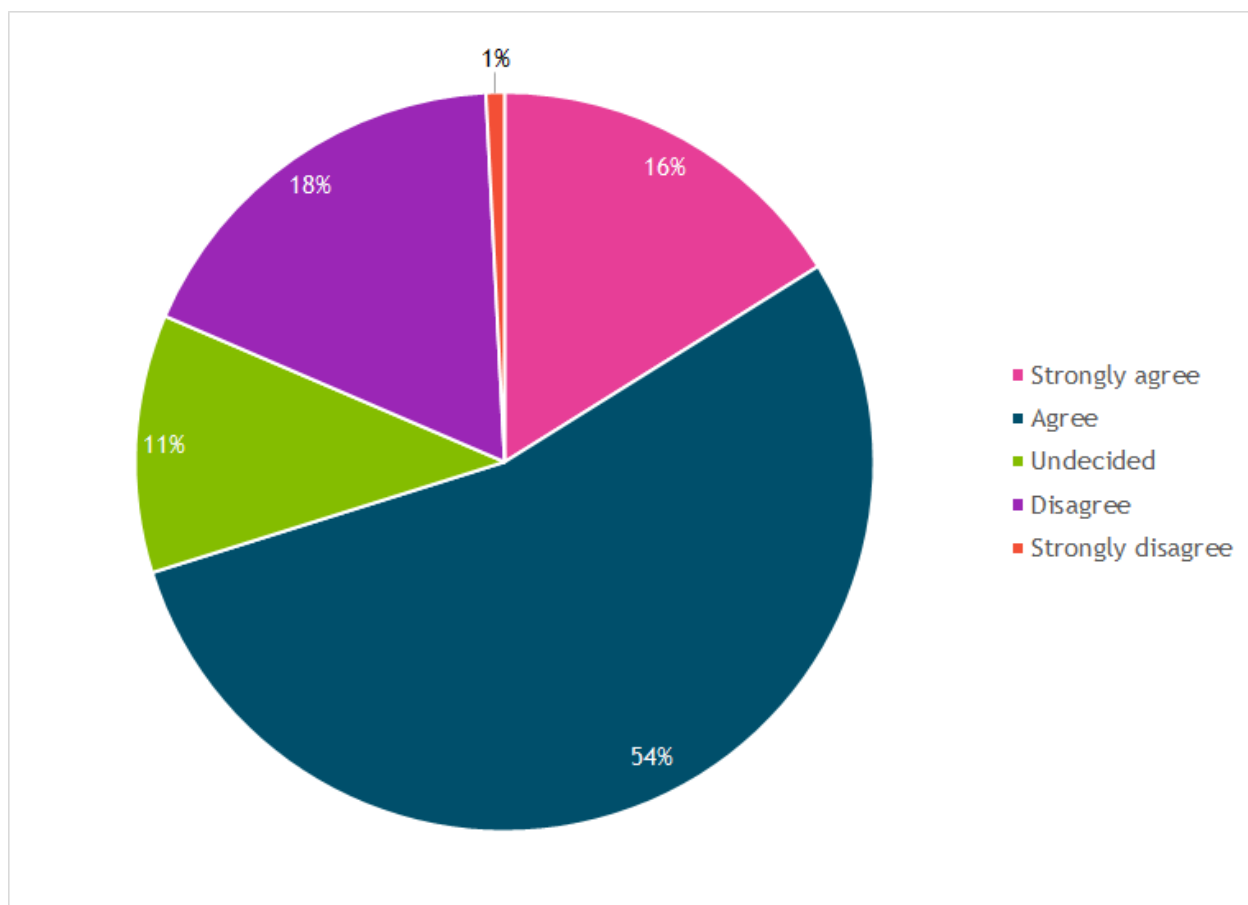
Positive

- *The social care worker explained all about the needs for support.*
- *Covered some things and concerns.*
- *My son is autistic and has been followed by Social Services since he was 1 year old. [Relative/Carer]*
- *It was very easy as Social worker is a lady of the same age.*
- *This was a 1st visit but still they gave a lot of explanations.*
- *I discussed my problem with the social worker and clearly told her that I need a carer who can speak my language and she agreed on that.*
- *She gave me enough time to explain my health condition and helps that I was looking for.*
- *As she was unable to talk the carer was able to explain about the help and support needed. [Relative/Carer]*
- *She was very co-operative and listened to all my queries.*

Negative:

- *Made me fill out a questionnaire then left.*
- *Communication wasn't very good.*
- *I want help with everything in the sense that I need more support than just a carer.*
- *She wasn't clear about the help and support provided by social care services.*

Q5. The support I receive from my family, friends and other people was an important part of the discussion.



Key Findings

70% of the service users commented positively agreeing that the support from their family, friends and other people were an important part of the discussion.

The carers/relatives that we spoke with also highlighted that they were given enough time and opportunity to be part of the conversation.

19% of responders disagreed mostly highlighting they were living alone and looking after themselves or receiving support from professional carers.

Below is the feedback given by service users. It has been categorised into 'Positive' and 'Negative'.

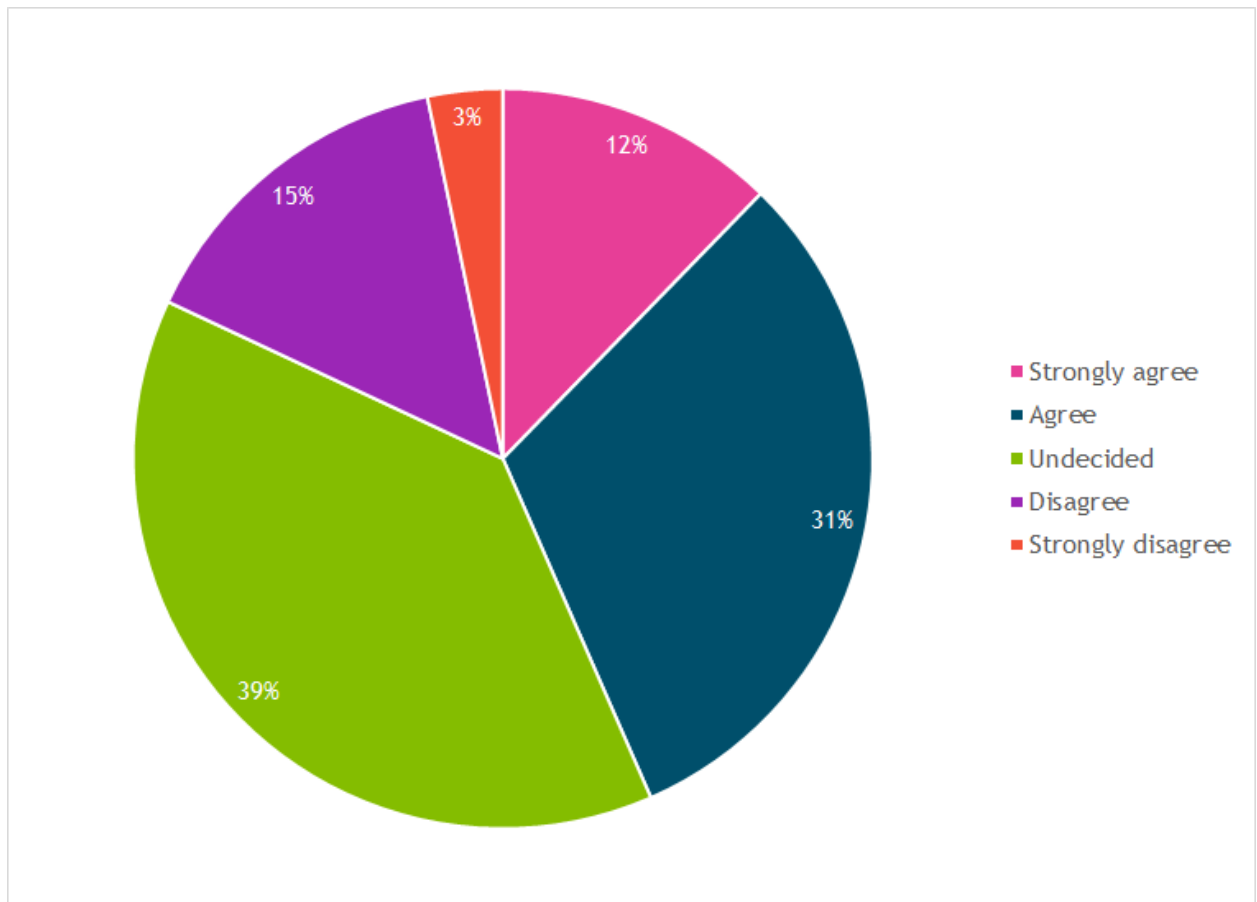
Positive

- *Family is constantly supporting.*
- *Family and Friends always there to support me.*
- *Spouse and daughter were the important part of the discussion.*
- *My daughter is my main carer she always supports me and was an important part of the discussion.*
- *I live alone and needs help for taking a shower.*
- *My friend was present and was part of the discussion.*

Negative:

- *Looking for more help from the service providers.*
- *Depending only on the carer.*
- *No support from the family always.*
- *Supported by carer.*
- *Managing alone.*

Q6. I was encouraged to consider local services and activities that would help me to feel safe, active and independent.



Key Findings

This question received one of the most mixed responses within the survey, with the largest category being undecided (39%).

Whilst some service users showed interest and excitement around the activities available others were less interested in community activities, mainly due to health conditions and corresponding limitations.

43% people responded positively to this question, stating that the social worker encouraged them and briefly explained and suggested activities that might be helpful. Many felt happy about participating and reported community engagement and reduced isolation. It was clear that some social workers were very knowledgeable about community services.

18% service users reported negatively, social workers seemed unaware and did not mention any community activities. Others were less concerned by community

activities due to their physical disability and mobility issues and some highlighted issues around not feeling safe, active or independent.

Some of the feedback provided by the service users and carers is highlighted below. It has been categorised into positive and negative comments.

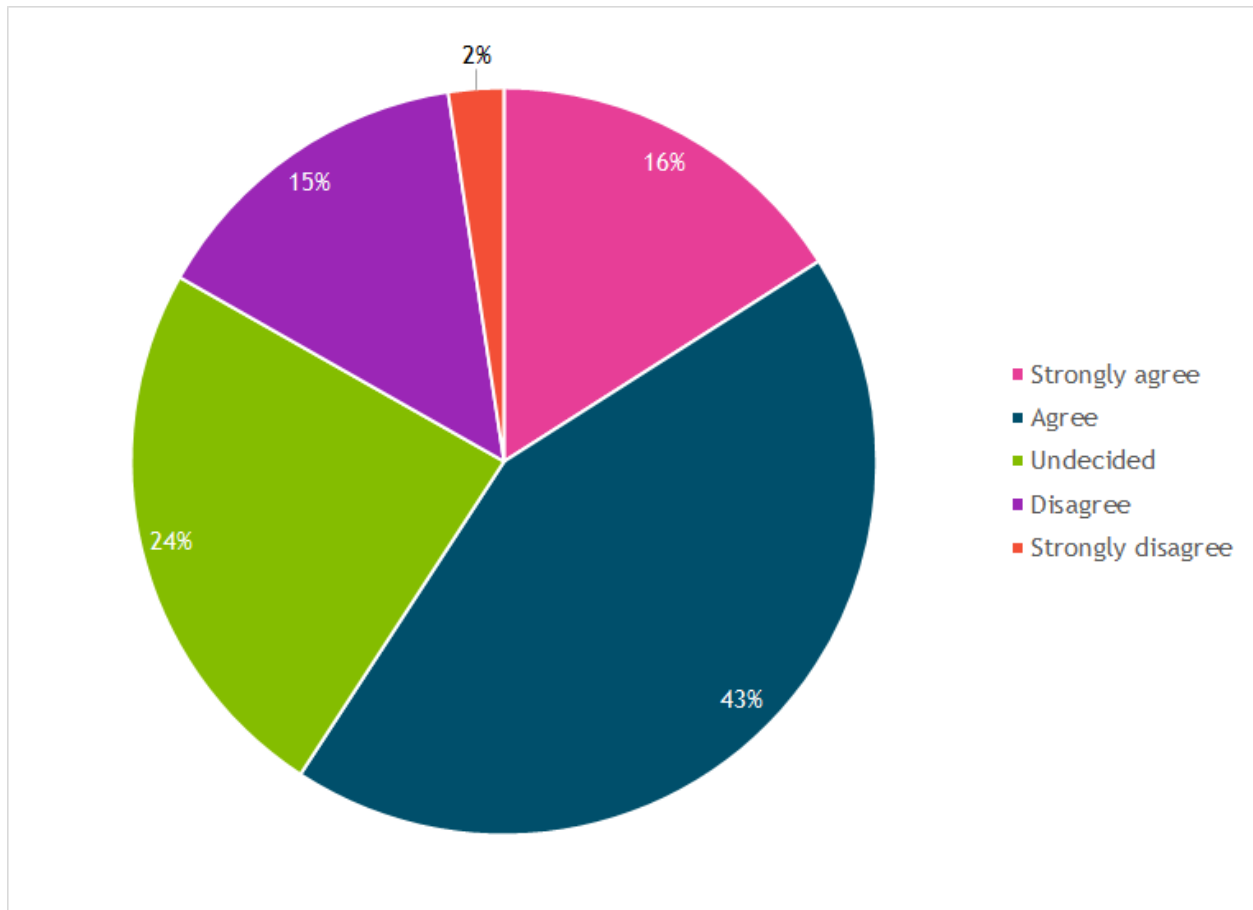
Positive

- ☺ *Parents would have loved to use the activities but need support to access other services. [Relative/Carer]*
- ☺ *My son has been involved in many local services and activities since a child. [Relative/Carer]*
- ☺ *They provided a lot of information and booked appointments with other services.*
- ☺ *They helped with referral.*
- ☺ *They receive all information but can't do many activities. [Relative/Carer]*
- ☺ *She explained everything about the activities, but I rarely use them due to my health condition.*
- ☺ *She explained about the activities and focused more on the activities which are helpful to keep myself busy and occupied.*

Negative

- ☹ *Have mobility problems.*
- ☹ *They made a lot of suggestions but didn't do anything.*
- ☹ *There were no activities, but the manager tried her best. There was no money so no encouragement.*
- ☹ *She is unable to use any kind of activities due to low mobility. [Relative/Carer]*
- ☹ *Can't remember that she had discussed anything about that.*
- ☹ *Not aware of any such activities.*
- ☹ *Nothing discussed about it as she is very old so least bothered. [Relative/Carer]*
- ☹ *I am housebound because the muscles in my legs are not enough for me to move.*

Q7. I felt involved in planning my support.



Key Findings:

59% of responses were positive. Service users reported feeling involved in decisions, satisfied with the social workers approach and comfortable and confident about planning their support. Family members we spoke to also reported that their views were considered in planning the support.

17% people responded negatively. These individuals reported only being asked to fill in the questionnaire and left. Family members reported similarly, also highlighting feeling left out and not involved in the planning.

A large percentage of people we spoke with (24%) were undecided, highlighting room for improvement in respect of involvement in planning and how it is approached.

Some of the feedback provided by service users and carers is highlighted below. It has been categorised into positive and negative comments.

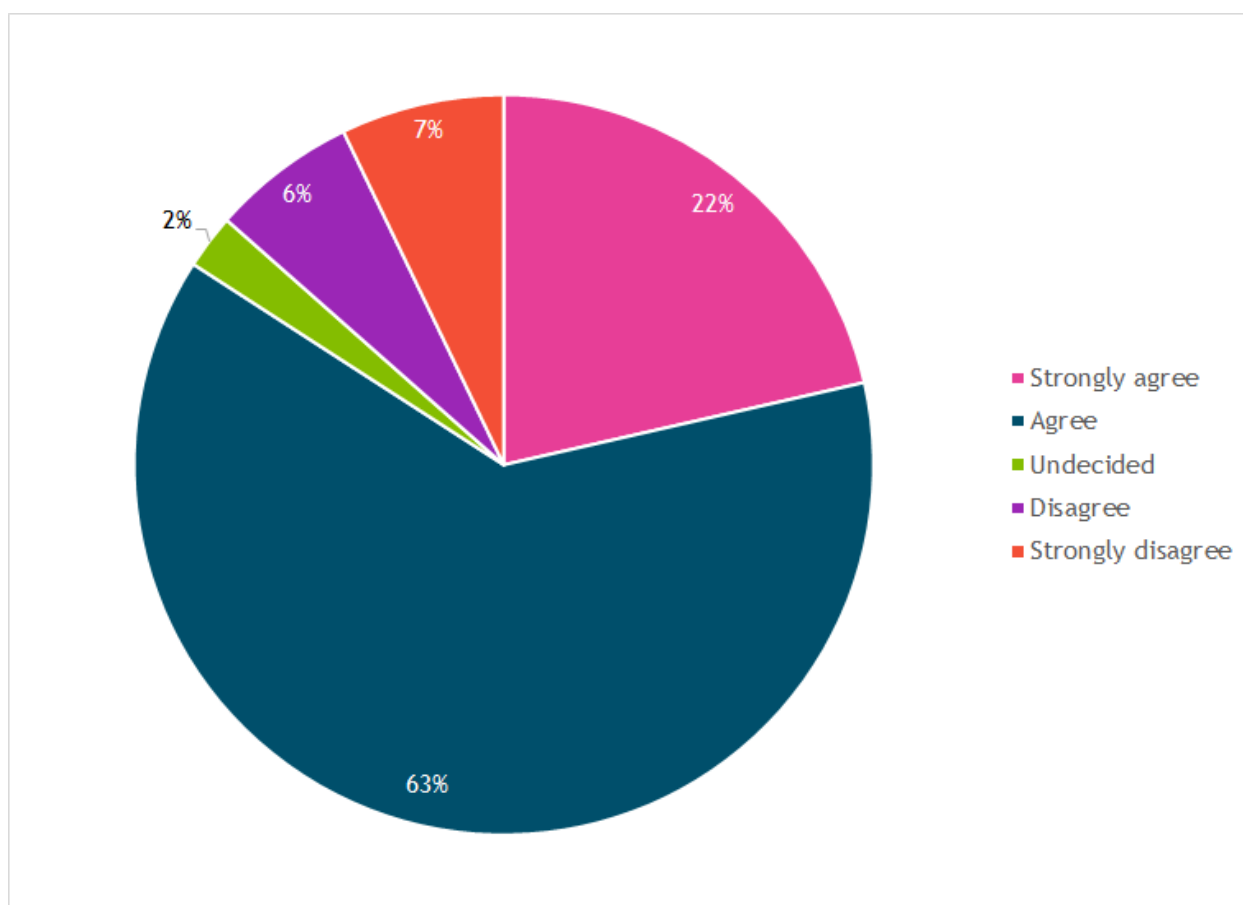
Positive

- ☺ *Got advised into making some decisions.*
- ☺ *They made a lot of suggestions to help with basic things. Asking him and her mum before making decisions. Very engaging. [Relative/Carer]*
- ☺ *Application forms were filled up. Social services are helping with everything like banking, National Insurance Number.*
- ☺ *She noted all my needs and planned accordingly.*
- ☺ *Yes, her opinion was taken for her planning of help and support. [Relative/Carer]*
- ☺ *The social worker planned everything by keeping my health condition in mind and I highly appreciate that.*
- ☺ *Happy with the discussion but can't say much more about this since the social worker's one more visit is due.*
- ☺ *Yes, her needs are the priority for her planning of her support. [Relative/Carer]*
- ☺ *Felt very involved as she listened to all my queries.*

Negative

- ☹ *Only visits annually and provide the reports.*
- ☹ *Made me fill out a questionnaire then left didn't ask my opinion.*
- ☹ *When I first moved, there was no real plan as to where he would be placed, and I have been moved around.*
- ☹ *Didn't get the opportunity to choose a carer.*
- ☹ *There is no proper planning for my support.*
- ☹ *I wasn't felt fully involved since I requested for the carer with specific language but they it's not possible for them.*

Q8. I was satisfied with the discussion I had with the social worker.



Key Findings:

85% of services users reported being satisfied with the discussion with their social worker. They reported finding the discussion useful and looking forward to receiving more help, as agreed. Comments highlighted supportive staff, helpful information and advice, and improvements in their condition, in terms of mobility and confidence.

13% reported back negatively, with 7% strongly disagreeing with the statement. This was one of the questions receiving the highest proportion of 'strongly disagree'. These service users were disappointed with social services, felt they were not getting enough help in terms of hours and the preferred language request was not being met. A few individuals fed back that their package had been cut and others, that they were not able to afford the private carers for the extra help needed. They had requested financial help, but these had been rejected.

Some of the feedback provided by service users and carers is highlighted below. It has been categorised into positive and negative comments.

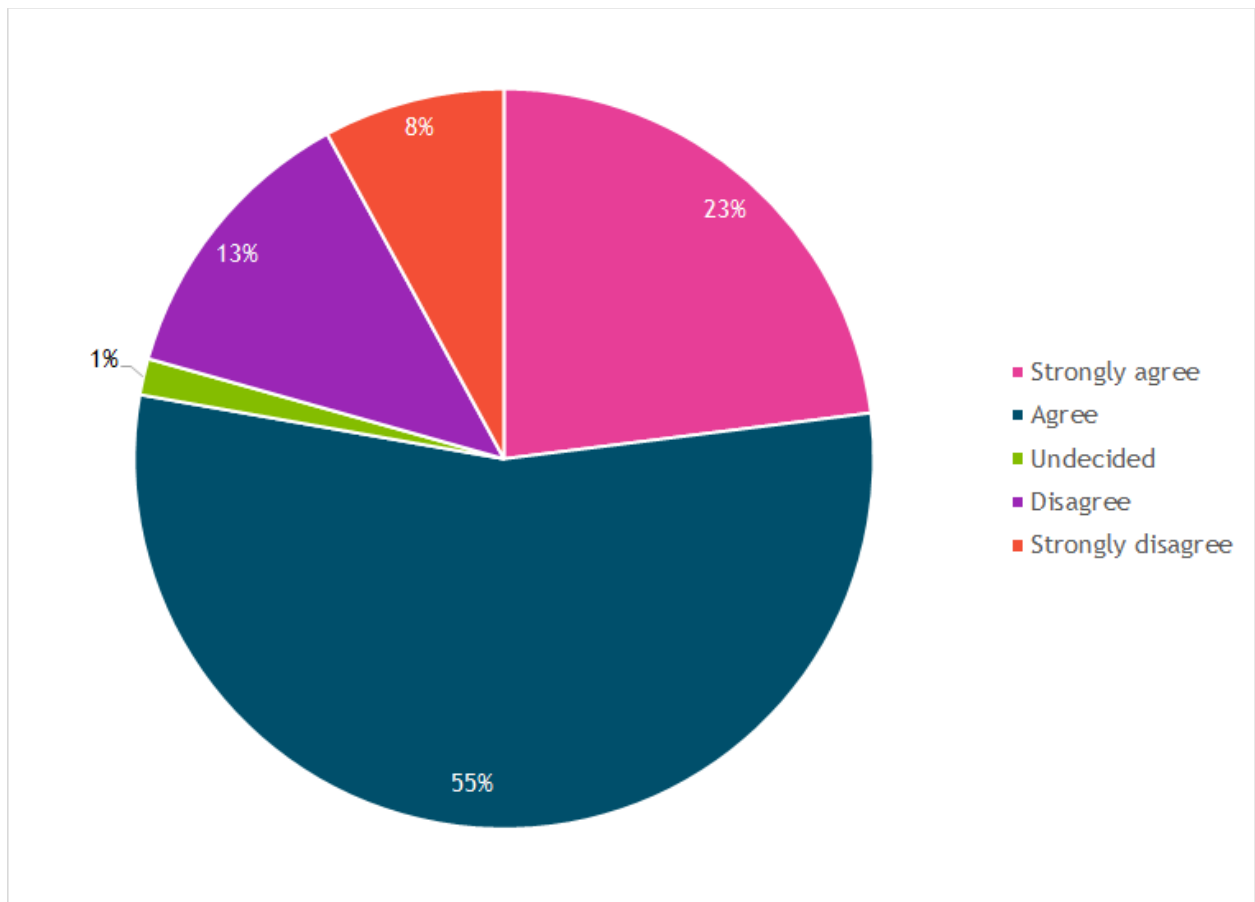
Positive

- ☺ *Was very open with us about everything. [Relative/Carer]*
- ☺ *It was very pleasant and useful.*
- ☺ *It is easy to speak with the social worker.*
- ☺ *Very happy with the services they provide.*
- ☺ *She agreed to send more help.*
- ☺ *Highly satisfied and very helpful because I was so helpless before that.*
- ☺ *She provided me with two carers which are really making my condition better.*
- ☺ *Satisfied with the discussion and waiting for the follow up.*
- ☺ *They have provided all sorts of resources that I requested.*
- ☺ *Very satisfied with the discussion because she gave us enough time to explain the things that she needed help with. [Relative/Carer]*
- ☺ *Satisfied with the discussion as she agreed to provide carers for the help and support I needed.*

Negative

- ☹ *I feel social services were sent on a mission to cut package.*
- ☹ *Need more hours of help when spoke about it they said they are short of staff.*
- ☹ *I have requested for more help for my wife who is having Dementia, but they did not give me any information. [Relative/Carer]*
- ☹ *They are not sending my language carer, but they always send different language speaker which is annoying.*
- ☹ *I didn't feel involved at all, there have been many issues with carers in the past so having a social worker is what I need now.*
- ☹ *Need more hours of help but they refused and said they can't afford, and I should go for a private carer.*
- ☹ *Very disappointed with the discussion as she did not provide much help.*

Q9. I received the right amount of support to be able to do the things that I needed help with.



Key Findings:

78% of service users responded positively. They reported on very professional, experienced and kind carers, good at their job, and satisfaction with the agencies for considering requests and sending carers with appropriate languages. They highlighted helpful duties undertaken including bringing their medicine, helping with household activities, sometimes taking them out and accompanying them shopping. Family members spoke similarly.

On the other hand, 21% of service users responded negatively, complaining of not getting the right amount of help from the social care agencies. These individuals reported carers were attending only for very short periods, not arriving on time and always rushing to finish their work as soon as possible. Requests to increase the number of working hours went unheard.

Some of the feedback provided by service users and carers is highlighted below. It has been categorised into positive and negative comments.

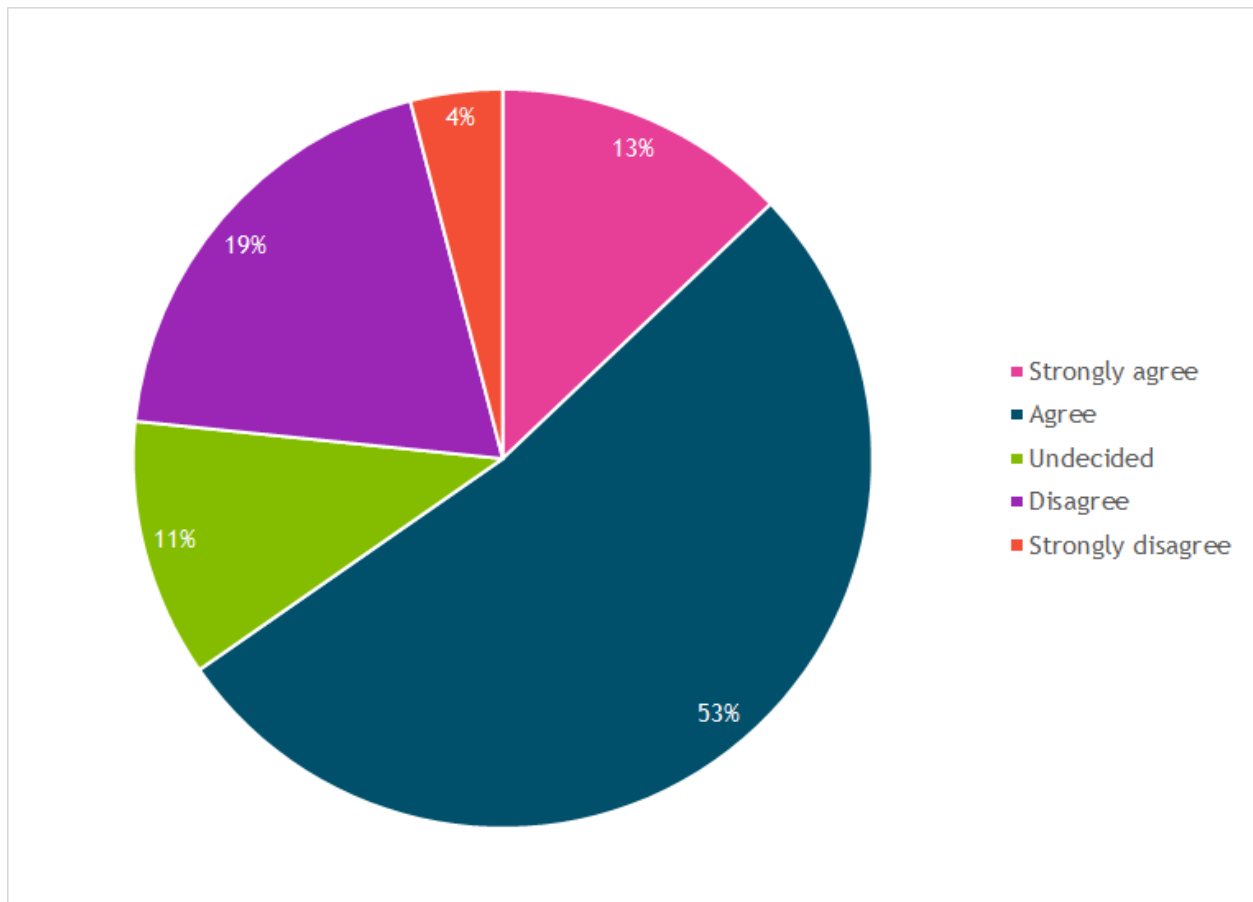
Positive

- ☺ *They always take good care.*
- ☺ *The carer who speaks my language is very nice.*
- ☺ *Social worker has been nice and kind.*
- ☺ *They always provide the help I needed.*
- ☺ *Some items did not come but the social worker got them for me.*
- ☺ *I am getting the proper help and support that I needed. And they keep on checking about my condition always give me the assurance that they can offer me more help if required.*
- ☺ *The carer is supporting me with the help I needed.*
- ☺ *Receiving all the help that she needed with and the services are very good.*
- ☺ *Receiving the right amount of help and support from the social services as agreed by the social care worker, which is very helpful.*

Negative

- ☹ *He did not receive anything of any sort after his assessment took place. [Relative/Carer]*
- ☹ *We don't get a lot of support; the worker doesn't come often.*
- ☹ *Not receiving the right amount of help which my wife needed. The doctor never visits, only sends the medicine. [Relative/Carer]*
- ☹ *Need more visits and assessments.*
- ☹ *They arrive too late.*
- ☹ *Not receiving proper help as agreed by the social worker. There should be 45 mins of help whereas I'm receiving only 10-15 mins which is not enough at all.*

Q10. I am satisfied with the quality of the services I receive.



Key Findings:

The feedback on the quality of services was 66% positive percentages reported in this survey. Those responding positively here praised the services and expressed satisfaction overall and around staff attitude, behavior, and professionalism.

The service users talk about the professionalism and attitudes of carers which was very positive.

23% of people responded negatively highlighting dissatisfaction, feeling they were not receiving the right amount of support or highlighting poor quality help and support, poor time keeping, poor communications about changes and late arrivals and being rude.

Some of the feedback provided by service users and carers is highlighted below. It has been categorised into positive and negative comments.

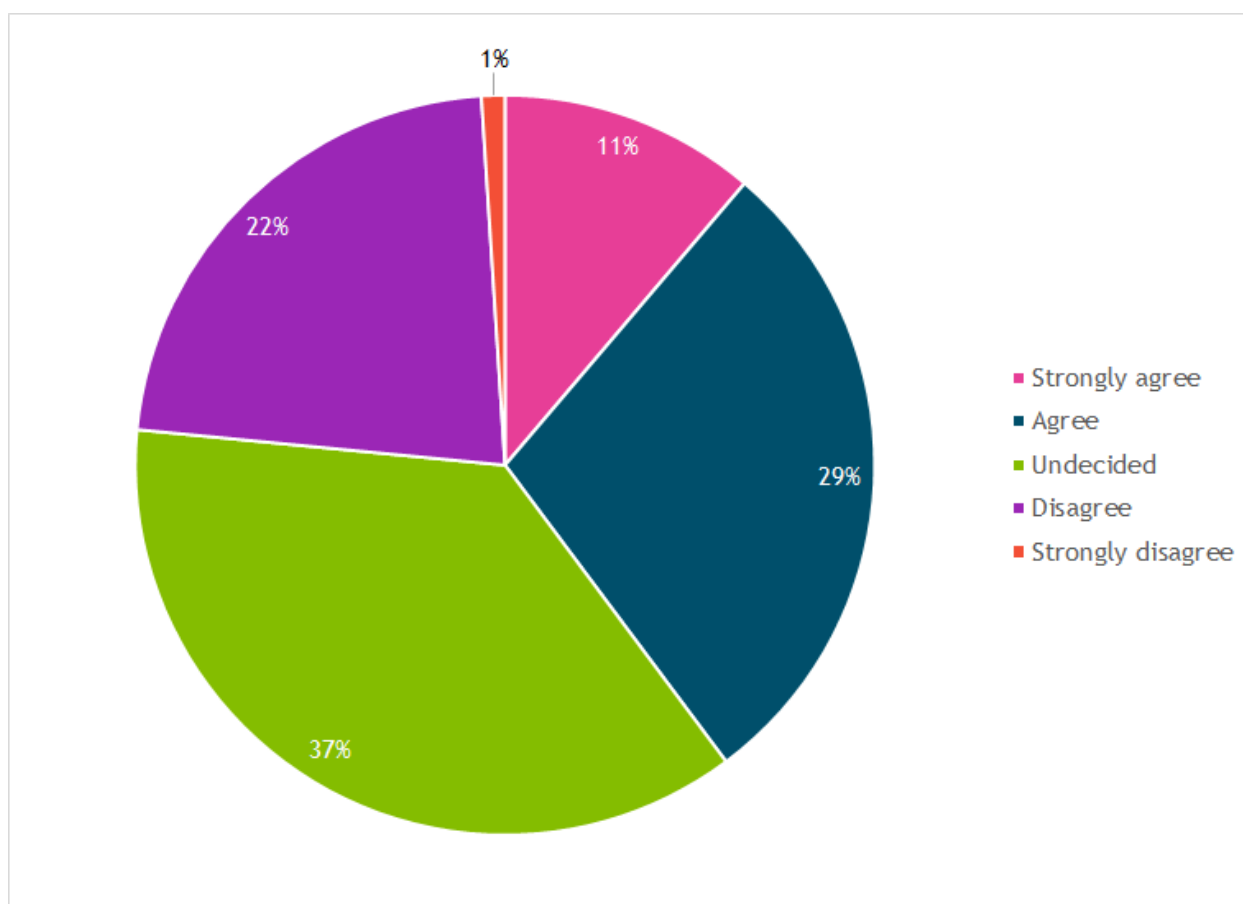
Positive

- ☑ *The carers are very professional and they do their job well.*
- ☑ *The agencies have recruited very nice carers who do their work very patiently and make the user comfortable.*
- ☑ *She is having Physiotherapist to do exercises and get better mobility.*
- ☑ *It's always a nice and helpful visit.*
- ☑ *Very satisfied with the services.*
- ☑ *The carers attend all my calls and give the feedback for me.*
- ☑ *The carers are very friendly and helpful. One of the carers helps me with shopping and taking me outside and another carer helps me with the household activities.*
- ☑ *The carer is doing her job very nicely and she is well trained.*
- ☑ *The carer does her job very nicely and my mother-in law likes her company she feels very comfortable with her. [Relative/Carer]*
- ☑ *Very satisfied with the quality of services they provide.*
- ☑ *He was great. He picked up on my Father's medication. It slowed his heart rate and it was no longer required. He also referred to the doctor who was helpful. [Relative/Carer]*
- ☑ *The carers are brilliant and they always treat well.*
- ☑ *The carers are always helpful and they visit regularly and provide all sorts of help required.*

Negative

- ☹ *Very disappointing with the services.*
- ☹ *They don't do anything to support.*
- ☹ *No info because there's no way to get the services.*
- ☹ *They don't provide the proper help and support needed.*
- ☹ *Package is ok but they want to cut it and reduce the hours.*
- ☹ *I like being independent and I don't want other people interfering with my life.*
- ☹ *Not at all happy with their service.*

Q11. I find it easy to find information on what is going on in my community.



Key Findings:

This is found that this question has received the largest percentage of negative comments and the lowest percentage of positive responses.

Only 40% of people gave positive feedback to this statement. These individuals indicated getting regular community updates and information through newsletters and emails. Some also highlighted that carers and social workers helped to provide information about community activities.

37% of the service users were undecided about this statement, neither agreeing nor disagreeing. Indications from feedback highlights that people were either not looking or that information was variable, sometimes available and sometimes not.

23% of service users responded negatively. The largest percentage of disagreed responses received by this question, which is 22%. Service users with disabilities, visual impairments, hearing loss or deafness and Dementia were particularly prevalent within this category of negative responses. Some individuals indicated they had requested help to access the information but had not received any.

Some of the feedback provided by service users and carers is highlighted below. It has been categorised into positive and negative comments.

Positive

- ☺ *I know about everything that is going on in the community through the leaflets.*
- ☺ *I read the newspaper and watch the news, so I know what's going on.*
- ☺ *I always get the newsletters which keeps me updated.*
- ☺ *Social worker is helping for getting the information.*
- ☺ *All has been discussed during the visit about the activities going on in the community.*

Negative

- ☹ *Need help to get the information.*
- ☹ *Nothing has been taken into consideration. Nothing has changed.*
- ☹ *No updates not receiving any emails about the activities in the communities.*
- ☹ *They don't provide the templates or newsletters.*
- ☹ *It's difficult to get the information.*

Q12. Any suggestions that you would like to make for improving our services.

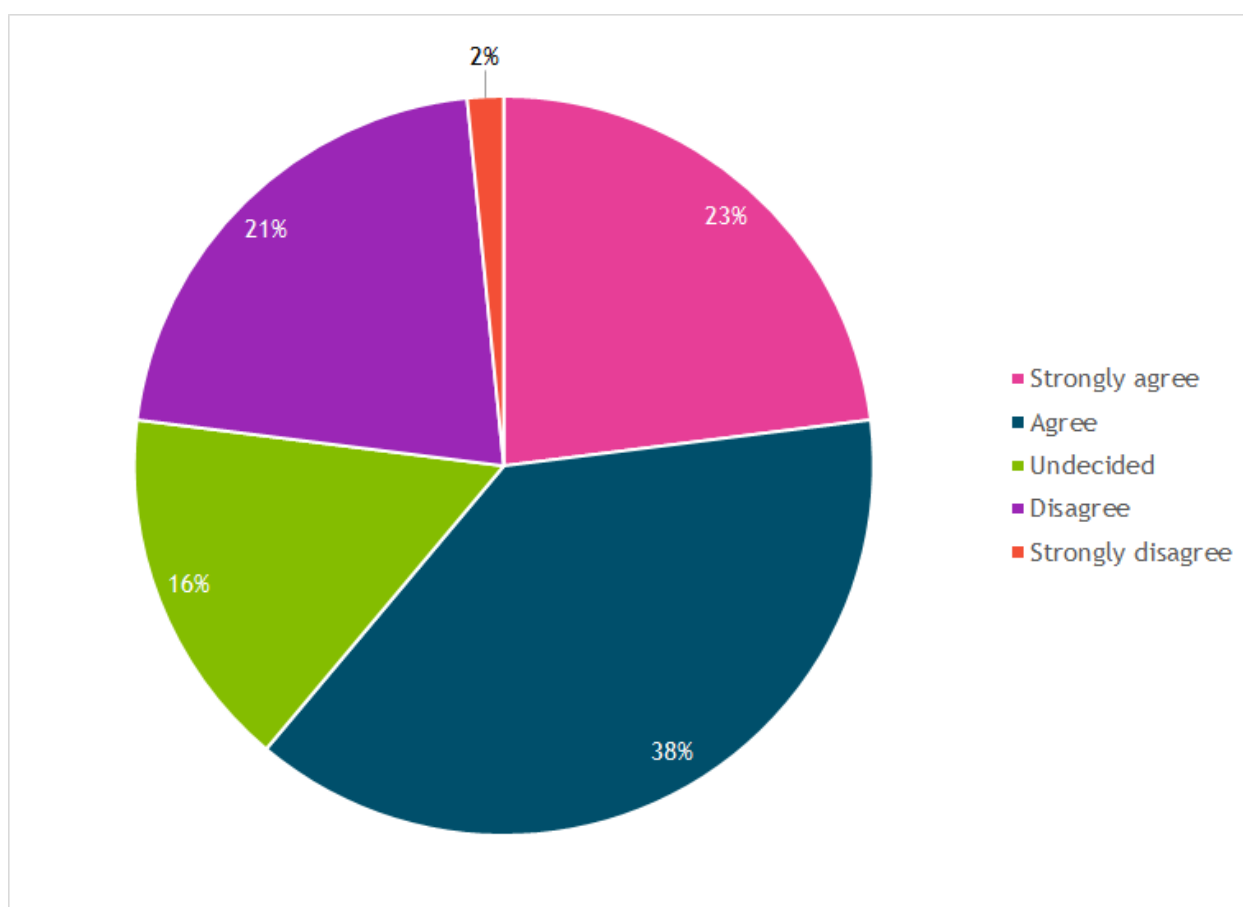
Service users were asked an open-ended question on whether they had any further comments or suggestions.

Service users welcomed this question and answered very positively in the main. They were pleased to have these services available to them and very appreciative of the good work being done. They also had many suggestions for improvement, talking about reducing communication gaps, increasing proactivity, ensuring voices are listened to and heard and issues the raised addresses in a timely manner. The families of the users with high levels of disability suggested recruiting honest and reliable carers who are well trained and professional.

Some of the suggestions made are listed below

- *Get more involvement with the recruiting agencies to have a proper communication with the service providers.*
- *Needs information about the services available.*
- *Looking for more help needs improvement for the betterment of the services.*
- *Be in regular communication at least through emails about the social care services.*
- *Need more regular updates at least through emails or newsletters.*
- *Continue the good work which you are doing that's helpful.*
- *Doing good job only need more communication with social carers.*
- *They should appoint more staff, they always short of staff.*
- *Need to improve in hiring the social workers. The social workers are not punctual.*
- *Need more regular visits by social workers.*
- *I am visually impaired, so I asked them for providing me information with the large prints but still did not do the needful.*
- *Need more staff with more professionalism.*
- *Lack of reactivity regarding the current updates about the activities that are going in the community.*
- *Need more transparency about their visits.*
- *It will be helpful if they can send the same carer whom I asked for.*

Q13. At the end of the visit I was clear about the next steps and what to expect.



Key Findings:

Most individuals responded positively to this question, with 61% either strongly agreeing or agreeing with the statement. These service users highlighted that social workers booked the next appointment for them and the additional follow ups.

23% of people responded negatively. These service users were unaware of the next steps and highlighted the social worker had not provided any further information or communication what to expect. A few people commented that the social worker didn't have much time to explain things and was in a hurry to leave.

Positive comments highlight the helpful information, helpful and cooperative staff.

Some of the feedback provided by service users and carers is highlighted below. It has been categorised into positive and negative comments.

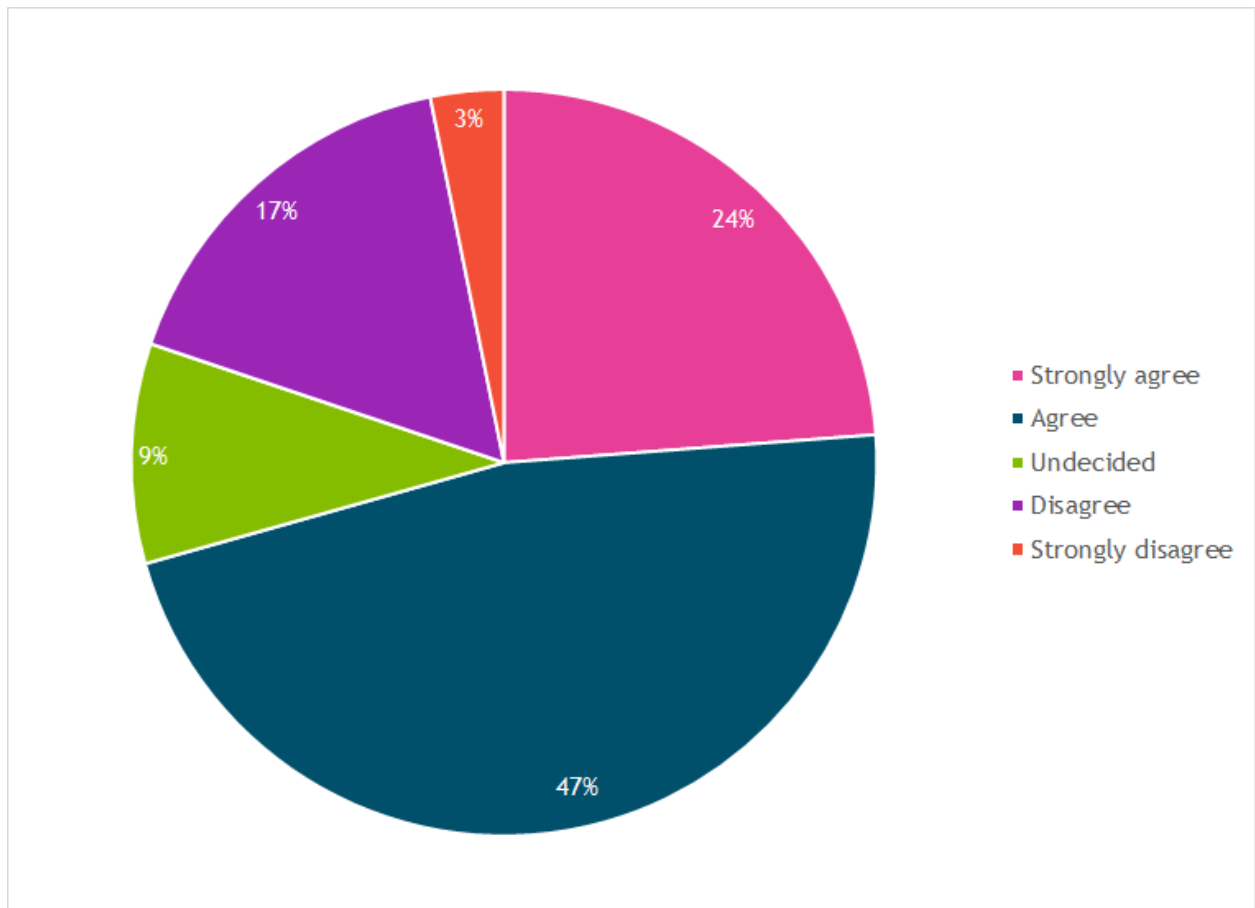
Positive

- ☺ *Always know when the next visits are fixed.*
- ☺ *All very clear. Day plan assessment. They gave a number for following up. They called 1 month later for follow up. Social Service is reachable easily by phone.*
- ☺ *Social services are very good. They have the right knowledge. They helped with referrals to other services. She is very happy with service.*
- ☺ *A few application forms were made and referrals. More support for adults with autism.*
- ☺ *They were very clear.*

Negative

- ☹ *They talked a lot but didn't do anything.*
- ☹ *The social worker did not explain about the next steps.*
- ☹ *They leave within 10min of arriving.*
- ☹ *Cannot contact social worker.*
- ☹ *All they said was we'll contact you in the future.*

Q14. The social worker left details of how to contact him/her if there was a problem in the future?



Key Findings:

71% people responded positively and gave positive feedback. Service users agreed that the social workers were responsible and provided their email and contact numbers for any future communication needs. Some of them provided cards which have all the emergency numbers on.

20% of service users responded negatively. These service users highlighted they did not receive any contact details and did not have any information about whom to call in an emergency.

Some of the feedback provided by service users and carers is highlighted below. It has been categorised into positive and negative comments.

Positive

- ☑ *Left her email ID for future contact.*
- ☑ *Gave templates and mobile number.*
- ☑ *Provided office number.*
- ☑ *They have a card with all phone numbers.*
- ☑ *They have all numbers to call in case of emergency.*

Negative

- ☐ *Did not provide any contact details.*
- ☐ *I don't have the workers contact details.*
- ☐ *No contact information was given.*

8.0 Monitoring Information Analysis:

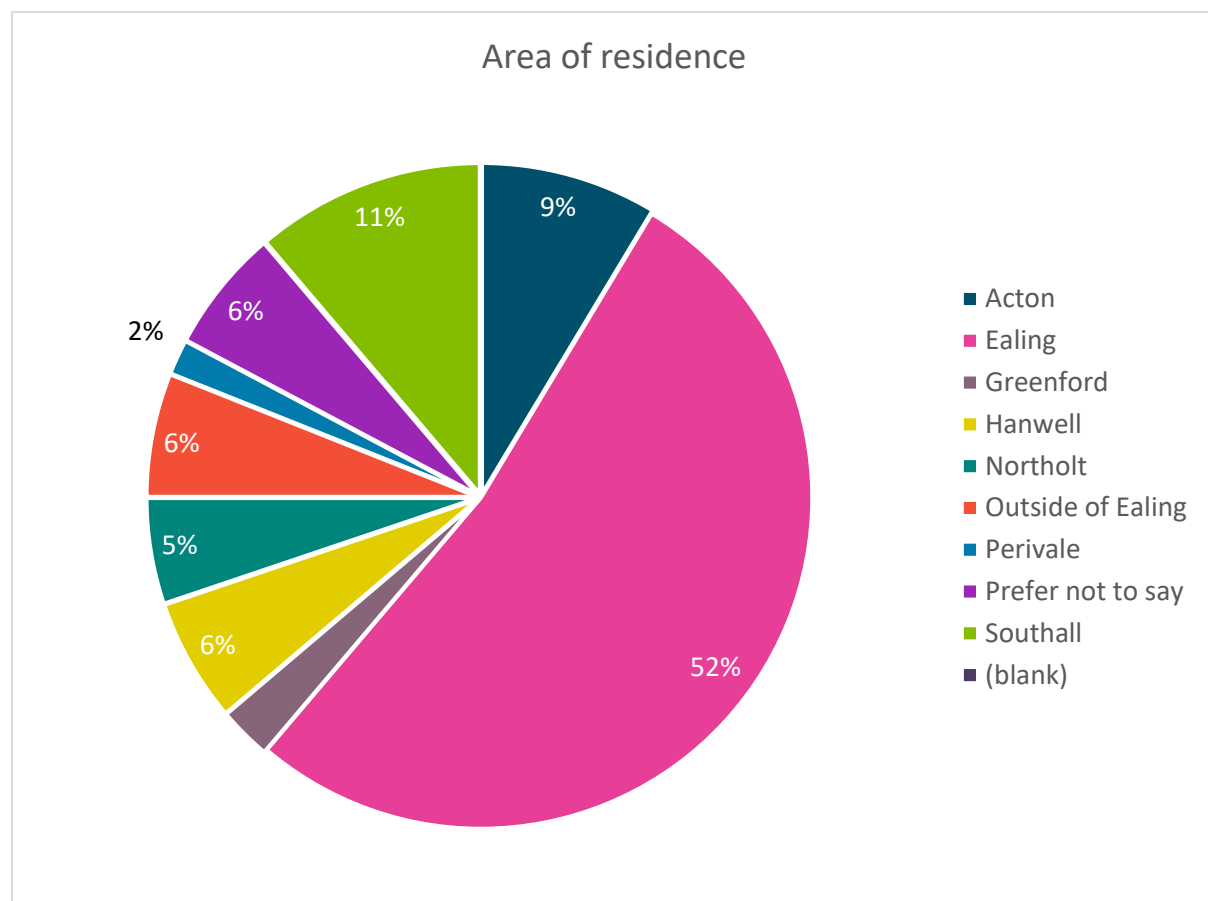
Out of the people we spoke with, 35% are aged 75-84 years and 28% of the individuals are above 85 years.

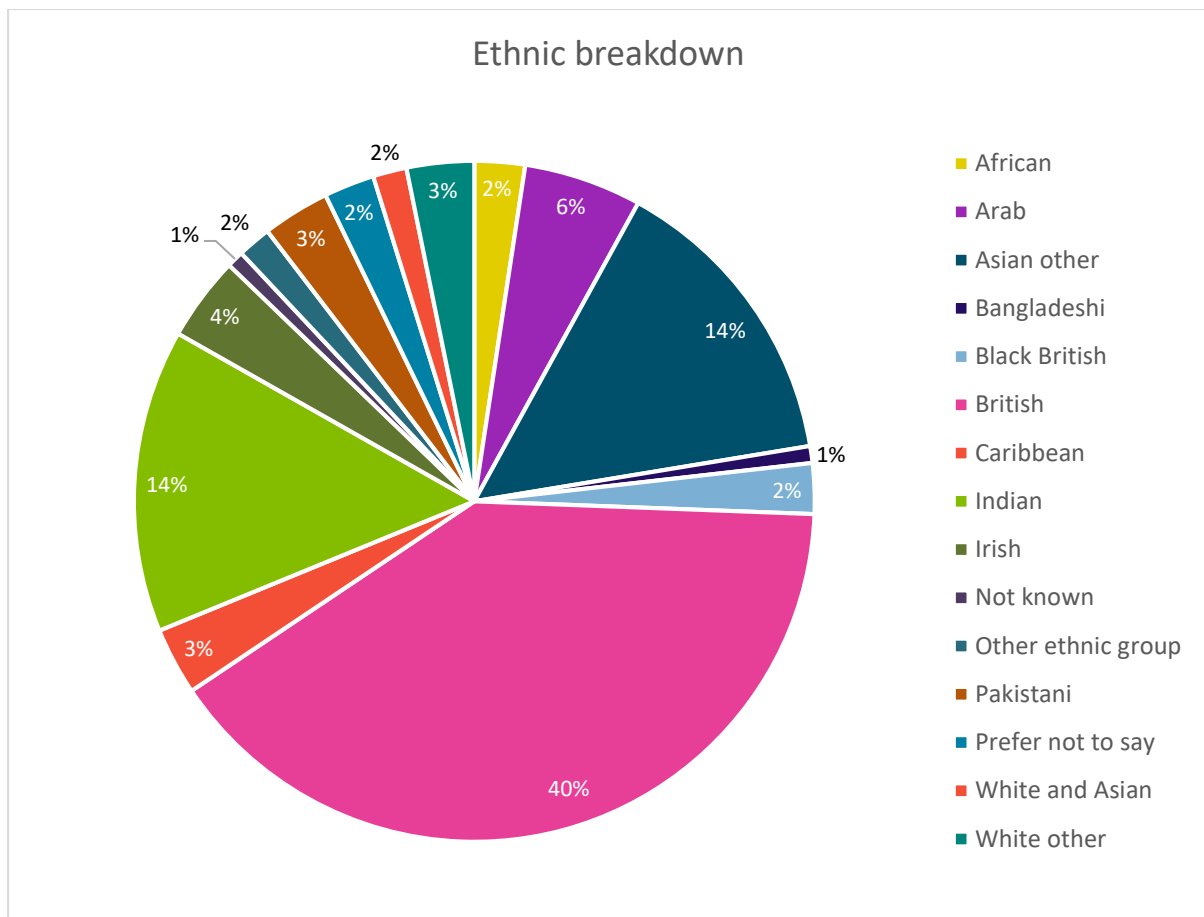
57% are female and 43% male.

85% of the individuals have disabilities and more than 90% are have long term health and social care needs.

Due to their physical and psychological illness 64% of users are unable to work and 33% are retired.

Of the people we spoke with 52% were from Ealing; 11% from Southall; and 9% from Acton. See the chart below for full details.





In terms of languages, 88% of individuals give us feedback in English and 12% in other Asian languages such as Hindi, Tamil and Telugu.

9.0 Conclusions

Social workers appear to have made good headway in carrying out reviews and reassessments under the Future Ealing: Better Lives approach and ensuring positive service user experience of the process. The large majority of people we spoke with were pleased with how their reviews were handled and the staff members interaction and communication with them. Overall the responses to a variety of statements were very positive. Considering these may have involved some sensitive discussions and resulted in some reduced packages of care, this is strong indicator of a skilled and caring workforce.

Some areas we discussed with service users received more mixed reviews and higher rates of negative responses. These indicate that focus and attention is needed around provision of community information on what is available in the local area, as well as encouragement and support to use these services. In addition key contact information for the social worker/team/dept is an area that could benefit from a more consistent approach.

Notwithstanding these more prominent areas, each question did receive a portion of negative responses and attention should be paid to ensure the experiences of all service users is taken into account. Each individuals experience is unique and can help draw attention to areas of service provision which may require improvement.

Moving on from this review it may be helpful to audit satisfaction levels for those that received package reductions, package enhancements as well as those that remained the same. In addition, a way to measure satisfaction against individual staff members would help assist the development of core skills, values and behaviours and drive forward and embed strong practice within the workforce. Service users we spoke to were clearly very complimentary about individuals and opportunities for buddying, mentoring or observing those more experienced and skilled staff will assist new and developing staff members.

Areas of good practice and recommendations are highlighted below in more detail.

10.0 Areas of Good Practice

Overall service users reported high levels of satisfaction with the reviews and reassessments they had been a part of. They gave particularly positive feedback in relation to the following statements:

- Q2 I knew when my social worker had arranged to visit me
- Q3 The social worker treated me with dignity and respect
- Q4 I was able to talk about what I wanted help with and the best ways of supporting me
- Q8 I was satisfied with the discussion I had with the social worker
- Q9 I receive the right amount of support to be able to do the things that I needed help with

The following good practice was highlighted by service users:

- Service users spoke highly of staff attitudes, describing them as polite and friendly, and highlighting supportive, kind and attentive behaviour, which created an environment where service users felt comfortable.
- Service users highlighted good communication, with the majority stating that they were notified before the scheduled visit. Equally there was lots of good practice highlighted about provision of contact details and next steps following the visit.

11.0 Recommendations

The recommendations for areas of improvement are listed below.

- 1. Good practice and improvements: The study highlights various areas of good practice across the different services as well as where improvements are needed.**
 - 1.1. Share the report findings with social care staff
 - 1.2. Share relevant findings with care agencies, through Care Provider Forum
- 2. Community information: The largest area of negative feedback received was around a lack of information on community services.**
 - 2.1. Ensure social work staff are aware of local services and groups in order to inform service users of activities that can contribute towards making them feel safe, active and independent.
 - 2.2. Ensure strong linkages between social work and care agency staff and social prescribing staff and programmes.
 - 2.3. Support local organisations to develop and provide accessible information for example those with visual impairment and hearing loss or deafness.
- 3. Carers: A large amount of feedback received was in relation to care agency staff**
 - 3.1. Ensure care staff arrive promptly, stay for the full length of their allocated visit and take time to do the tasks to a good standard.
 - 3.2. Improve systems in place around communicating late arrivals and cancelled appointments.
 - 3.3. Monitor quality and audit care agencies against timeliness of arrival, length of visit and cancellation rates.
 - 3.4. Ensure that service users' individual needs and abilities are catered for through appropriate mandatory training, specialist training and refresher courses.
- 4. Care reviews: In many instances people were unable to recall the specific visit or differentiate it from other visits. Although people were satisfied in the main, they expressed a desire for more regular reviews to ensure care provision was fit for purpose.**

- 4.1. Request feedback following each visit by signposting service users and their carers to Healthwatch Ealing.
- 4.2. Ensure regular reviews and follow up reviews take place to assess needs and impact of support provision.
- 4.3. Undertake regular review of clients in receipt of largest reductions in care support packages

5. Contact information: Many service users are unaware of what to expect next and who and how to make contact

- 5.1. Introduce a clear and consistent approach for staff to adhere to.
- 5.2. Introduce an appointment card or similar with key information, names and contacts of social worker/dept, including emergency contacts.
- 5.3. Ensure telephone lines are answered and email communications are responded to in a timely manner.

6. Social work staff: Service users reported varying experiences based on the quality, manner and approach of the staff member they were in contact with.

- 6.1. Ensure consistent high standards of behaviour, attitude and approach from staff, through regular supervision and mentoring opportunities.
- 6.2. Ensure regular opportunities for informal training and reflection on the values and expected behaviours as outlined by the Better Lives Programme.

7. Language: This was one of the most common barriers reported

- 7.1. Review client data on preferred language
- 7.2. Audit use of professional translator services used by social workers

Appendix 1

Ealing Council Adults' Services

Better Lives Service User Questionnaire

We want Ealing to be a healthy and great place to live and we are working hard to improve the way we support people who need a bit more help to stay well and be as independent & active as they can be.

Obtaining feedback from the people who use the services is an important part of this process.

We are contacting you because you were recently visited by a social worker who talked to you about the services and support available to help you.

In terms of the cohort of respondents they are service users who have had a review or reassessment of their needs by a social worker in the last 12 months. At some stage all of these people would have been through an initial assessment and will be in receipt of services.

We would like you to answer some questions about your experience to help us understand what we are doing well and where we can improve.

Anything you say will be treated in confidence and will only be used to improve and develop services in the future. Your data will be securely stored and any comments used within reports will be anonymised. Taking part in this survey is voluntary and if you decide not to participate this will not affect your services in any way. We would be grateful if you could answer all the questions and would welcome any suggestions that you might have about improving our service.

Please note, this is a local survey and you may have received a national survey. We would be grateful if you could still complete this as well.

Date of Contact :

Client ID :

Hou were recently visited by a social worker who talked to you about the services and support available to help you. **How do you rate your overall experience of this service?**

☐ Very poor ☐ Poor ☐ Okay ☐ Good ☐ Excellent

Tell us more about your experience...

1. I knew when the social worker was due to visit me

☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree

2. I knew why the social worker had arranged to visit me.

☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree

3. The social worker treated me with dignity and respect

☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree

4. I was able to talk about what I wanted help with and the best ways of supporting me.

☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree

5. The support I receive from my family, friends and other people (was an important part of our discussion

☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree

6. I was encouraged to consider local services and activities that would help me feel safe, active and independent.

☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree

7. I felt involved in planning my support

☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree

8. I was satisfied with the discussion I had with the social worker

☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree

9. I received the right amount of support to be able to do the things that I needed help with

☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree

If Disagree, what is the reason?

10. I find it easy to find information on what is going on in my community?

☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree

11. Is there anything else that you think would help you to stay independent?

13. At the end of the visit I was clear about the next steps and what to expect

☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree

14. The social worker left details of how to contact him/her if there was a problem in the future?

☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree

Adults' Services

Helping Ealing Residents Live Better Lives

Action planning following the Healthwatch survey of the experiences of social care reviews and reassessments.

December 2019



Introduction

- As part of our Better Lives programme, we have made a commitment to putting strength based approaches and the promotion of independence at the heart of our social work practice.
- We can evidence that Better Lives is starting to have the intended positive impacts on the things we can count, like number of contacts, referrals, reviews and spend.
- But we must also invite and welcome feedback from our users and carers on their experiences of social work and our commissioned services.
- We invited Healthwatch to undertake this user survey as part of our Better Lives programme.
- This is an important part of reflective practice and our commitment to improving the quality of services.
- We are grateful to the volunteers and Healthwatch committee members for undertaking the work, providing such a clear report and well considered recommendations.
- This document outlines how we plan to address the recommendations. These actions will become part of the ongoing Better Lives programme, and will be monitored and revisited routinely with Healthwatch and other stakeholders.

Kerry Stevens, Director of Adults Social Services

December, 2019.



Recommendation 1: Sharing good practice and areas for improvement

- ✓ We will share the report and findings with social care staff
- ✓ We will share relevant findings with care agencies, and table at our provider forums

Recommendation 2: Community information

- ✓ We will continue to promote the “know your patch” approach within our teams
- ✓ We will hold themed events during 2020/21 to engage and exchange information with providers, users and our workforce
- ✓ We will continue use our provider forums to improve engagement between social workers and care agencies
- ✓ We will monitor the development of NHS social prescribing initiatives within the new GP networks, and ensure that we maximise opportunities to align approaches to signposting and the wider community offer
- ✓ We will review current demand and capacity of our information and advice services to inform options for strengthening the offer during 2020/21.
- ✓ We will continue to work with the WLA to support widespread use of the Careplace resource directory - <https://www.careplace.org.uk/>
- ✓ We will review options for improving the accessibility of our public information for people with visual impairment, hearing loss or deafness.

Recommendation 3: Services provided by care agencies

- ✓ We will continue to work with home care agencies to embed good communications and systems to monitor the timeliness, duration and outcomes of visits
- ✓ This includes using new digital solutions for monitoring contract compliance, which include assessment of rostering and monitoring visits. During 2020/21 we will review the effectiveness of call-monitoring technology solutions to inform scope for improvements in monitoring, invoicing and payment
- ✓ We are piloting an new way of organising double up care in 2020/21, based around geographical zones, which should reduce travel time and the risk of late visits when two carers are required
- ✓ We are piloting new approaches to only commissioning care with home care providers who have a CQC rating of Good or above from January 2020
- ✓ In 2020/21 we will work with other London councils on a shared compliance and quality framework for home care, supported by the Association of Directors of Social Care
- ✓ We will continue to provide a comprehensive training programme for our staff and providers, that reflects minimum training requirements, good practice and our local needs assessments. We intend to provide more training on developing leadership and ASD awareness, for example.

Recommendation 4: Understanding of care reviews

- ✓ We will include signposting to Healthwatch in our communications following our reviews
- ✓ We will continue to target and monitor the number of reassessments and outcome based reviews undertaken as part of Better Lives, and are working to increase our capacity to keep in touch with people who use services

Recommendation 5: Making contact

- ✓ We will introduce an calling card system to provide users with key contact information about their social work visit and who to contact within the council if their needs change
- ✓ We will start to review telephone statistics to asses areas for improvement in our call handling within social work teams

Recommendation 6: Values and behaviours

- ✓ We expect high standards of behaviour, attitude and approach from staff which are now reflected in the values and behaviours framework of the council, and are built into social work job descriptions
- ✓ Staff will continue to receive regular supervision. We are strengthening our local supervision policies and provide regular coaching, reflection and support to staff as part of Better Lives
- ✓ This year we have extended opportunities for staff to reflect and discuss our practice and performance, through introduction of a team representative forum and an extended management meeting for Heads of Services and their direct line reports
- ✓ During 2020/21 we have agreed introduce more opportunities for shadowing and exchange between managers and front line staff

Recommendation 7: Language and translation services

- ✓ We will audit data on language requirements and on use of the councils translation services to identify if there are any gaps in provision