

# Future of Home Care Services



## Summary Report - December 2015



# Introduction

This report by the Elders Council of Newcastle provides the findings of an event in December 2015 at which 57 people discussed their expectations of home care services. This event was held in partnership with Newcastle City Council (who were in the process of developing a market position statement on home care as well as recommissioning home care providers) and Healthwatch Newcastle (as part of the research on the quality of home care in the city). Home care has been a continuing issue for the Elders Council of Newcastle for many years and in autumn 2015 we were asked to organise an event to gather the views of people not currently in receipt of home care services about what their expectations might be of a home care service.

Adults from a range of organisations were invited to attend an event at Newcastle City Library on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of December 2015. Representatives or members of the Elders Council, DeafLink, Chain Reaction, Wa Hong and Newcastle Society for Blind People came together to hear a presentation from the City Council about its commissioning process and the surveys from Healthwatch Newcastle before discussing their expectations of home care services.

## Key Findings

- Most people did not know to whom to turn and find out about home care when and if they needed this
- Access to information about supporting services at the time needed (and not just online) is essential.
- Assessment of needs should focus on the whole person – not just on one specific problem.
- Personalised advice and guidance is needed to find the best way to appropriate – and affordable – home care.
- When home care services are arranged, it is desirable to have continued contact with a key worker to coordinate and review progress.
- Home care workers have to be well trained, adequately paid, and able to provide a reliable and trustworthy service.
- Independent living in a home of one's choice is a common aspiration, so services should enable this wherever possible by provision of aids and equipment as well as personal care.

Overall the main conclusion may be that there are 57 varieties of views about home care but only one main brand, and that is person centred care. However these findings have to be seen in the context of reduced funding for adult social care and, particularly with the current government, a changing relationship between the individual and the state. Although payment for care was not the primary issue under discussion, it was obvious that many participants had an expectation that health or social care would provide for them should they require personal care and support to remain in their own homes. The warnings given recently by sector leaders that funding shortages will result in more unmet need and service failings does not appear to be shared by ordinary people in Newcastle.

## **Next Steps**

The event revealed differences in information and understanding about what is available now, but some common expectations about what is needed in the future. This report will be sent to Newcastle City Council, Healthwatch Newcastle, the Elders Council Board and other participating organisations. However we would like to see the findings disseminated widely and future steps taken to promote a better-informed public. As part of our contribution to enabling this to happen, the Elders Council plans to organise information days on this topic in spring 2016.



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