

**“100 Voices on Care and Support ”
(Paid Staff)**



**A Report by Equal People
(June 2016)**

Introduction

Equal People is an involvement group. The group wanted to find out what people with learning disabilities felt about the quality of their **paid care**.

They designed a short questionnaire to: -

- gather the views of adults with learning disabilities living in South Tyneside around their paid care and support
- identify the barriers for people with learning disabilities on receiving good quality paid care and support
- use this information to make recommendations that would improve health outcomes for all adults with learning disabilities living in South Tyneside

Four group members (Paula Lowson, Peter Gardiner, David Taylor and Shaun Armour) supported by Carole Watson (Involvement Worker), designed a short questionnaire. This questionnaire was completed by 100 adults with learning disabilities from: -

South Shields Central Library (Day Opportunities)

Autism Able

Day Opportunities at Low Simonside CA

MISTAS (Men in South Tyneside self advocacy group)

Equal People, Talk 2 Us and Ladybird members

Tenants at Simonside Court and Danesfield

Shared Lives

Young mothers with learning disabilities

Perth Green base

Holderhouse Gardens

People attending the evening session at Jarrow Community Association

Arts 4 Wellbeing



Pictures were used to promote discussion.

What did we find out?



- Most people said they had picked their own staff and were happy with the overall quality of support they received
- We asked **“What does GOOD support mean to you?”**

People said....

“Someone who listens...”

“Having someone to talk to ...”

“Getting help when you need it”

“Staff who help you meet up with friends and family...”

“Being happy just having a good time.”

“Someone who makes my meals, helps with the cleaning and helps me use the Metro.”

- We asked “What could IMPROVE your care and support?”

85 out of 100 said they liked everything but gave these ideas to make it better

“I’d like to see my friends more often – in the evenings and at weekends.”

People said there were less staff to support at these times. People said they would like more weekend activities for EVERYONE.

“It would be good to be more independent... “

Some people felt the staff could help with travel training or managing money and some people would like to improve their cooking skills at home.

One person said it was important to be supported by female staff ... She said; -

“I don’t like it when male agency staff are brought in ... it means I have to ask for a woman to support with my laundry, hair and medical appointments. It’s embarrassing”

“We need more holidays!”

People said they wanted the chance to try new things – or visit new places. Some people in supported living had LOTS of time away but some people wanted more breaks.

People on Shared Lives talked about doing things together and getting the chance to go on a cruise.

People said; -

“Shared Lives is like being part of a family I’ve had support in the past that was ok ... but this is **great!**”

“I feel really lucky now.”

We asked: -

“What do you do when the weather is bad?”

92 out of 100 said they stayed at home.

Most people said; -

“I watch TV or DVDs”

“I don’t like snow or ice I might fall over.”

“I have lots of hobbies at home anyway like sewing or knitting. The staff help me.”

“I do wordsearches or crosswords.”

We asked: -

“Do you know how to complain if you are unhappy with your staff?”

Some people said they would speak to Your Voice Counts staff first for support.

People also said.....

“I’d speak to staff at day service...”

“I’d speak to Jon Laws.”

“I haven’t complained before so I’m not sure what I’d do about it...”

Key Messages

- People need to continue being involved in choosing their own paid care and support. This gives people the choice and control they need in their lives.
- Staff training is important. Staff who listen and help maintain contact with friends and family were highly valued. Words like “interested”, “happy”, “thoughtful”, “kind” and “has a good sense of humour” were used to describe these staff.
- Supporting people to be independent is also highly valued. People said they wanted to learn whether it’s cooking or cleaning, managing money or doing laundry.
- Supporting people with travel training was raised by a lot of people some had travel training years ago and some had never been given the opportunity.
- People said they wanted staff to help them get out more at weekends and evenings. They liked staff who came up with good ideas!
- Some people were unsure how to complain if they were unhappy with staff.



Recommendations

- 1) People with learning disabilities should continue to be involved in recruiting their own staff – and in the interview process of wider council and health staff.**
- 2) Staff training should involve people with learning disabilities. Talk 2 Us delivers learning disability awareness training. This could be offered at induction and as part of continual personal development for staff.**
- 3) Individual targets and activities for people with learning disabilities should have a focus on independence eg money management, cooking skills, travel training, etc. It should be offered to everyone – at all stages of life and experience.**
- 4) Travel training should be standardised. Lots of people offer it – but staff should be aware how to access it from a central point. Talk 2 Us could offer this (there is already a “Travel Safe” DVD available).**
- 5) Staff training should include an awareness of evening and weekend activities available across South Tyneside. Again, this could be part of the induction process. Staff should be aware of the FANE website (Friends Action North East) which pinpoints activities and events that are happening across the region.**
- 6) People should be given training on how to complain if they are unhappy with their service.**

A Report by Equal People (with support from Carole Watson)
June 10th 2016

Update (July 2016)

- 1) Following the “100 Voices on Care and Support”, there was a “Care and Support” event at South Shields Central Library on 6th June 2016 (which was part of Carers Week). There were 87 people at the event (including self advocates, carers, council staff, health and learning disabilities staff). There was a “100 Voices” presentation and there was a presentation by the Young Carers. Stephen Laverton (Adult Social Care Delivery Manager for South Tyneside) was the guest speaker. This was followed by a group session to discuss the barriers to good care and support - and to consider the next steps.
- 2) The group activity looked at 3 questions. Here are the comments from those involved; -

How can we make sure ALL people with learning disabilities have good care and support?

“We need more paid carers and family carers should be paid the same and get the same training and conditions.”

“There should be more government funding.”

“Pay decent money – this will attract decent staff!”

“You should pick your own care and support workers.”

“There should be more staff to work evenings and weekends.”

“There should be more evening and weekend activities.”

“Staff should be trained in sign language and making things accessible.”

“Care providers should have good training programmes.”

“There should be special qualifications “

“There should be regular audits and checks”

What training do paid staff need?

“Awareness training”

“Health and Safety, first aid, medication awareness, health and hygiene, manual handling, communication skills”

“Learning to be a good listener and to watch out for problems. Person centred training.”

“Encouraging people to be more independent.....”

“Staff need to know about the rights of people with learning disabilities and to pass this on to people they support.”

“Making sure people know about diversity we need more black paid staff.”

“Good quality training that relates to the specific needs of the people they are supporting and regular updates.”

How can we make sure good staff are recognised and rewarded?

“Good management and supervision”

“More progression ... and reward experience.”

“Pay them more”

“There should be a register so you can see how good staff are before you employ them.”

“Create a website called “Check-a-carer. com”

“Have an awards event ... to reward staff. There should be Support Worker of the Year! This should be nominated by the people who use the service.”

“A trophy for young carers is a good idea too!”

“Write a report for the newspapers..... “

“More random checks highlighting good staff as well as not so good.”

“More events like this where we can celebrate the good work that is done in South Tyneside.”

3) For more information, contact; - carole.watson@yvc.org.uk