

Client Satisfaction Survey July 2016

Feedback Summary

Written and produced by Newcastle Carers

We would like to thank the carers who gave us their feedback in the survey.

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Purpose and background to the Survey

Newcastle Carers has been providing information, advice and support services to the 26,000 adult unpaid carers in Newcastle upon Tyne since 1998. In 2015 we were awarded the Newcastle Gateshead CCG and Newcastle City Council Adult Carer Support Services contract. The new service began operating on 1st November 2015.

In Newcastle, a carer is defined as someone who; 'provides unpaid care and support to a family member, friend, partner or neighbour, ordinarily resident in Newcastle and who has a disability, has an illness, is frail, has mental health difficulties or has alcohol or drug related problems'.

In the UK the value of unpaid care carers give is £132 billion per year. The value of health spending in the UK is £134 billion per year.

We are required to self-monitor the contract. We do this in a number of different ways including twice a year asking carers who have used the service in the preceding 12 months to provide feedback on their experience. The information sought specifically relates to Newcastle Carers, it is not a generic survey of carers experiences of wider services and support. For this we conduct an annual Quality of Life survey on behalf of Newcastle City Council and Newcastle Gateshead CCG.

This is the fourth year we have carried out the survey, but the first one relating to our new core contract. We have revised the questionnaire, although many questions remained unchanged. The questions relate to themes identified through our extensive work with and understanding of carers issues and to those in the National Carers Strategy. The National Carers Strategy is currently under review by Government. There is currently no Newcastle Carers Strategy.

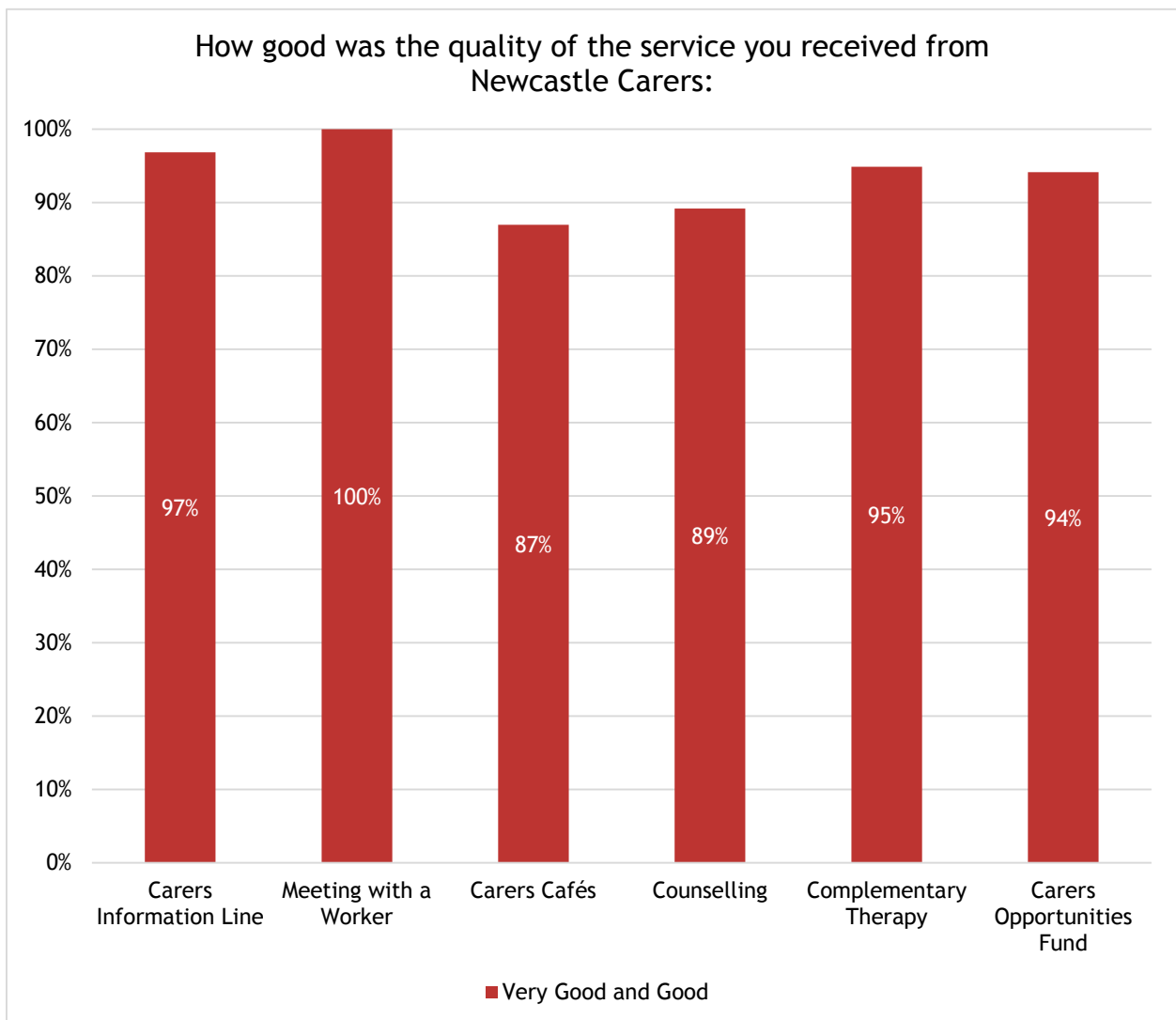
The information in this report was gathered during a three week period between June and July 2016. We asked carers registered with us to complete our Client Satisfaction Survey. 88 carers who shared gave their views, opinions and experiences. The following summary report illustrates the results and a selection of the comments received from carers.

Please note: not every person who completed a survey answered every question.

How good was the quality of the service(s) you have received from Newcastle Carers?

We asked carers to consider each of services offered by Newcastle Carers, and to rate the quality of the services they have received from the following options; *Very Good, Good, Neither Good nor Bad, Poor or Very Poor.*

The graph below demonstrates what percentage of carers rated our services *Very Good or Good.*



Our **Carers Information Line** service was considered to be one of our highest quality services, with **97%** of service users considering our Carers Information Line to be **Very Good** or **Good**. Comments for this service included:

“The Carers Information Line and the support [that] workers give are always very good. I have always come away from the organisation feeling well attended to. The Information and Support Team have a very high standard of service.”

“The Carers Information Line is very good and helpful. My experience in meeting a worker for information, help and support has been beneficial and useful.”

The Carers Information Line was established in November 2015, so it is excellent to receive feedback reflecting that within a relatively short space of time this service is having such a positive impact for carers.

Meeting with a Worker was considered to be our best service with **100%** of service users considering the service to be **Very Good** or **Good**. Comments about our workers included:

“I think the carers centre do an excellent job and the staff there are dedicated conscientious and caring. They make the carers feel valued and treat them with respect.”

“All of the staff are so helpful. I wish I had known about the carers centre earlier as they can help with a huge variety of support.”

87% of carers who completed our survey considered our **Carer Cafés** to be **Very Good** or **Good**.

“I gained a lot from the carers group and the professional support given.”

We are providing Carers Cafés across the city on a monthly basis, meaning wherever carers live they can access peer support. Many of the cafés are supported by our volunteers and it wouldn't be possible to provide them without their involvement.

Our **Carers Opportunity Fund** is also considered by carers to be one of our best services, with **94%** of service users rating it **Very Good** or **Good**. Comments about COF included:

“The Carers Opportunity Fund is a fantastic God send.”

Our **Complementary Therapy** service was rated highly, with **95%** of service users considering the service to be **Very Good** or **Good**. Positive feedback we received included:

“I have mainly come for massage with the Complementary Therapist, who has been worth her weight in gold for me. Whilst taking the stress away with her healing hands and listening skills.”

“Therapy sessions are excellent and very much needed when you're feeling really stressed and unable to cope at times you feel like you can't do this anymore. Amazing the hour helps to recharge you.”

Feedback for improvements for this service included:

“The complimentary therapy itself is good, but to book an appointment, takes a bit too long.”

“Complementary therapy sessions are very useful and help me in a stressful world. They could be offered more extensively.”

Complementary Therapy is a very popular service provided by one member of staff. Therefore, carers can wait a number of weeks between appointments.

The Complementary Therapy service is at risk of closure. We are in the process of fundraising to continue to provide the service beyond March 2017, when funding runs out. From research carried out on the service by Dr Alison Killen in 2015,¹ we understand how valuable it is to carers in supporting both their physical and mental health as the service:

- provides carers with an alternative to visiting their G.P.,
- provides a service that carers may be unable to afford elsewhere,
- provides a route for carers to maintain regular contact with the Carers' centre,
- reduces the demands on other staff at Newcastle Carers,
- reduces demands on social, health and voluntary services.

80% of carers who accessed **Counselling** considered the service to be **Very Good** or **Good**. Some of the constructive feedback we received included:

“I have received counselling service in the past which was very helpful.”

Feedback for improvements for this service included:

“Where possible telephone links may be more helpful e.g. a telephone counselling service.”

“Counselling came to an abrupt end due to counsellor getting a permanent position elsewhere. I understand funding issues, but having more staff would be better.”

“I think it would be most helpful if you could have say a small top up session [...]. It would help me as I live alone and suffer from depression and anxiety due to circumstances in my life. But I realise this may be too costly.”

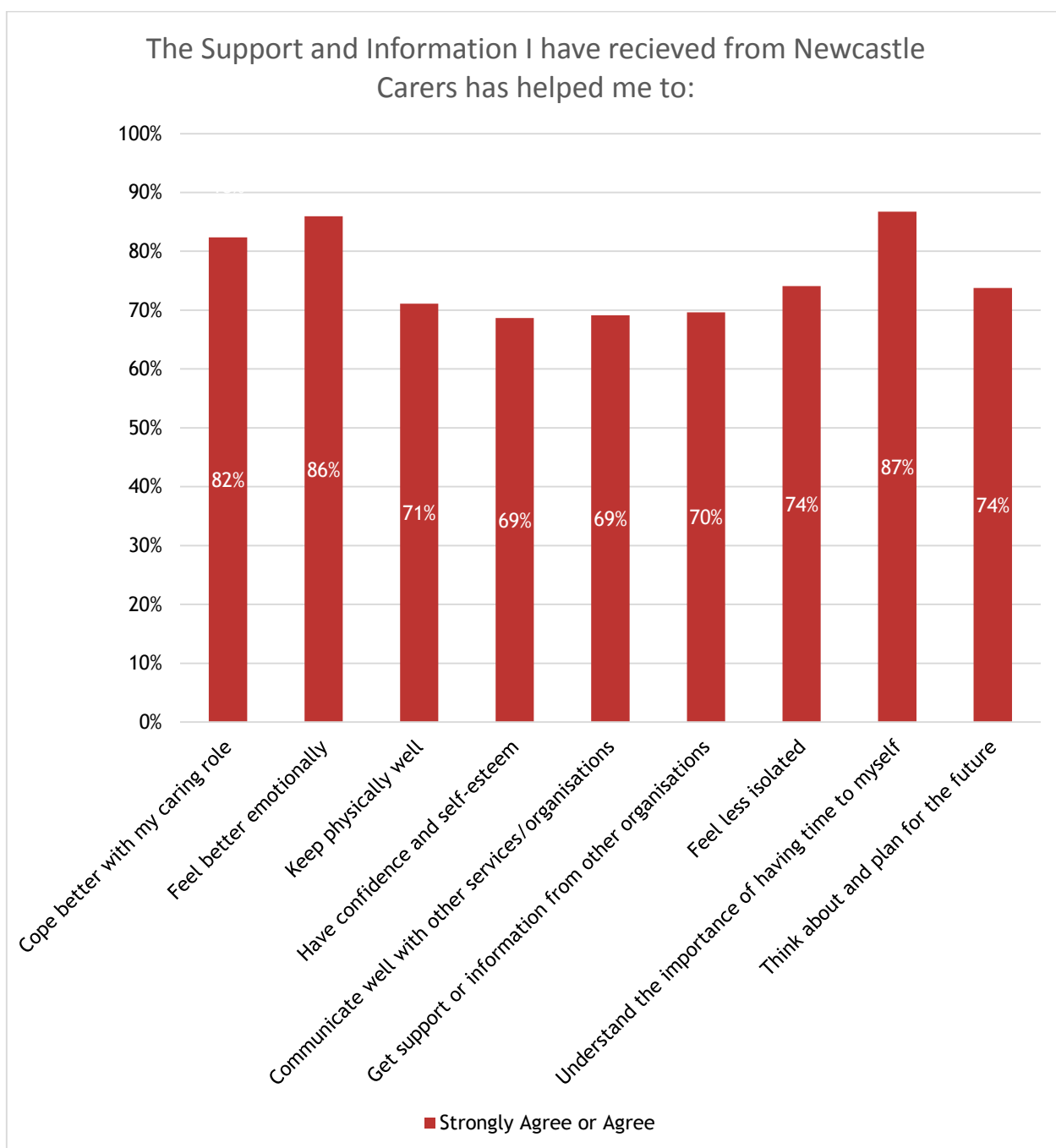
Our counselling service is provided by a group of dedicated, skilled and experienced volunteers. We currently do not have the capacity or resources to provide a telephone counselling service. However, this comment is being addressed with the setting up of new service **Listening Link**. This service aims to put carers in touch with a volunteer who will call them regularly.

¹ Dr Alison Killen, *The Perceived Value of Complementary Therapy from the Perspectives of Carers, Support Workers and the Therapist*

The Support and Information I have received from Newcastle Carers has helped me to?

We gave carers nine statements relating to how the support and information they have received from Newcastle Carers has benefited them in their caring roles. We asked them to consider to what degree they agreed with the statements by selecting one of the following options; *Strongly Agree*, *Agree*, *Neither Agree nor Disagree*, *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree*.

The graph below demonstrates what percentage of carers selected *Strongly Agree* or *Agree* to the statements.



82% of carers who responded to our survey **Strongly Agree** or **Agree** that Newcastle Carers had helped them to **cope better in their caring role**. Feedback included:

“I have gained a lot, and just the knowledge that you are the end of a phone, or in a drop in session helps to keep me motivated.”

“[Newcastle Carers] support me so much as a young [adult] carer, I’d be lost if it wasn’t for the help I get.”

86% of service users **Strong Agree** or **Agree** that Newcastle Carers has supported them to **feel better emotionally**. Comments about this service included:

“When I first started coming to carers I was very depressed, but they helped with everything, and now I’m a lot better than I was.”

“It’s made a huge difference to my wellbeing. Thankyou.”

Would you recommend Newcastle Carers services to other carers?

100% of carers agreed that they would recommend Newcastle Carers’ Services to other carers.

Feedback included:

“I have already spoken to people and friends and cannot help telling them about the kind, professional help and support available if they access Newcastle Carers.”

“I give out your number to every carer I meet who hasn’t heard of you.”

Our Information

We asked carers to consider how useful they found our newsletter and website.

82% of carers considered our **newsletter** to be **Very Useful** or **Useful**. Feedback we got included:

“I think the regular newsletter is very beneficial in giving the information about future events etc.”

“You do very well now! Newsletter very good and diary insert.”

Constructive feedback we received included:

“Could we have the main points of the newsletter in Chinese?”

We want to make our information as accessible as possible so, if carers were unable to read or understand any of our information we would urge them to contact us so we could find a

suitable solution. Also, our new website includes Google Translate so you can translate the information from the newsletter into any language you like.

75% of carers considered our **website** to be **Very Useful** or **Useful**. Positive comments included:

“I think you have already done very well with the newsletter and website.”

Constructive comments included:

“More links to what is available locally, information on other helpful organisations, practical information.”

“Receiving emails with reference to updated information on website.”

Our Opening Times and Venues

We asked carers if they were aware of Newcastle Carers’ Centres’ extended opening hours.

59% of carers who responded to our survey were **not aware** that Newcastle Carers was open on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month, and on the 2nd Saturday.

63% of carers did not expect to use our services during these extended opening hours.

We asked carers if they were aware of the range of venues across the city where Newcastle Carers offers support to carers.

Although **81%** of carers were **not aware** that we had drop-ins and Carer Cafés in the West End, Lemington and Gosforth area, **55%** believed that they would use these services in the future.

Positive feedback included:

“You are a wonderful service for carers across the city.”

Constructive comments we received included:

“Possibly a drop in place in town, Byker is a long way to come.”

“More things on an evening e.g. drop ins, carers cafés, activities, etc.”

We also asked carers for feedback on our opening times between Christmas and New Year to help inform us whether the Centre needs to be open and what services should be made available during this period.

80% of carers agreed that they **would not** make use of Newcastle Carers’ services, were the Centre open for the three days between Christmas and New Year. Feedback suggested:

“If people have advance notice that you will be shut they can get whatever information they need in advance. It's only a few days - people will cope for that length of time!”

However, some of the feedback we received from carers who said that they would make use of our services included:

“If I was desperate. This time can be a sad time. Being able to speak to someone either on the phone or drop in would be useful.”

”I might need to see a support worker if there was an emergency. I might use the information line in an emergency.”

In response to this feedback, we are keeping our Information Line service open over the three days between Christmas and New Year, meaning that any carers who would like to see support from one of our Carers Information and Advice workers will be able to speak to one over the phone.

About you as a carer

Age:

50% of the carers who completed our survey are **aged between 50-69**. Feedback regarding the age of the carers who access Newcastle Carers' services, include:

“Increase awareness of services + support available for carers especially for older carers e.g. adverts on TV, leaflets drops.”

“I'm in my 40's but feel a bit young and the odd one out at all the groups. Sessions and activities are used by those upwards of 60+.”

“Try and get younger carers involved.”

Gender:

79% of carers who completed our survey were **female**.

Sexual Preference:

80% of carers who completed the survey described themselves as **heterosexual**, and **4%** identified as either **homosexual** or **bisexual**.

Disability:

65% of the carers who completed our survey **do not** consider themselves **to have a disability**.

Ethnicity:

83% of carers who completed our survey described themselves as **White British**.

Additional Comments:

Training

"[The Carers Information and Advice Worker] ran the course really well. She is a 'mine of information' and really nice too - approachable and genuine. Thank you."

"I would just like to say a massive, big thank you. I was only able to come to a few sessions but I was treated with dignity, respect and, if needed, confidence."

"I attended a 6 week course on mental health within the family. I found the course beneficial mainly because of communication with course leader and the participants."

"I attended the course for "carers of people with mental health problems". The other delegates wanted to chat a lot and it became a series of chat sessions ... I wish the course had retained more of its planned structure. Time to chat was good too. I think half of each per session would have been ideal."

"Improve workshops on carers who care for those with mental health issues. Special sessions around young people with mental problems."

Former Carers

"A little extension to the 6 months termination point."

"It would be nice if Newcastle Carers would give counselling or support to those who are bereaved."

"It would be useful if Newcastle Carers gave some support to the newly bereaved and kept in touch with them. Counselling may be useful."

Services

"I honestly don't think you could have done more. The support I have received has been brilliant."

"All of the services have been excellent and feel they don't need to improve."

"For me, there is nothing else they can provide, they have helped with everything."

"Trip to Alnwick was great. More trips please."

"The trip to Alnwick Garden on was wonderful. Really helped me, also Christmas Party. More events where carers can meet would be useful, but obviously it all comes down to fundraising! And you are already doing so much."

"To be contacted as well as receive support from Newcastle Carers."

"More day trips e.g. Alnwick Gardens."

Staff

“All staff more very helpful and friendly, providing relevant information where applicable.”

“I have contacted Newcastle Carers on only a few occasions but have found them most helpful each time.”

“Services were fantastic. I received very quick and helpful advice and action.”

“Brilliant massages and great support workers will go that extra mile when needed.”

“Very good service with lots of lovely caring ladies who are caring and very understanding.”

“More availability for calling in (more staff).”

“Many other carers said, the person they care for with mental health issues has tried to take their own life - a person dedicated to coping with attempted or threatened suicide.”

“Advice Carers' who work full time and have a caring obligation.”

Cared For

“Will be good to be able to bring those who are being cared for. A flexible system [would] allow me to bring or not to bring my husband.”

Promotion and Awareness Raising

“Took a long time to realise Carer Centre existed.”

“Increase awareness of services and support available for carers especially for older carers.”

“There is a large demand for carer support and all [that] Newcastle Carers provides. This small service could be much larger as the demand is certainly needed. Keep up your good work to get the funding needed to help more carers.”

“You could extend the information and services to more people and carers.”

“More awareness advertising.”