

Changing Home Care Engagement Panel – influencing change

Your **healthwatch**
Leeds



In February 2023, we published our Changing Home Care Engagement Panel report outlining 26 recommendations based on feedback from people with lived experience.

We met with 21 people who either used home care themselves or were family carers. Some were unable to get out of the house independently and didn't have access to computers, so we trained up our volunteers to support them to access online meetings from their homes.

"I think it is great. Good use of technology to allow me to have my say." panel member

"I enjoyed watching how much some of the people got out of participating on the panel and enabling that by being a buddy." volunteer buddy

The recommendations are now feeding directly into the transformation of home care services in Leeds into a new Community Health and Wellbeing Service, starting with a pilot in one area of the city.

"The recommendations from the Citizens Panel report are now the bedrock of our commissioning intentions."

Kate Sibson, Commissioning Programme Manager, Adults & Health Directorate, Leeds City Council

Progress so far...

Our recommendation

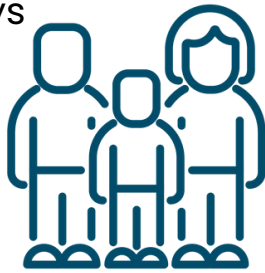
Raise awareness of home care services and how to access them so that people know where to get help when needed.

Progress

Leeds City Council have started looking at how initial communication with them about help with care can be made as easy as possible, that staff have the right information to hand so that people aren't passed from pillar to post. Their ambition is to co-produce front-facing information that is understandable to everybody.

Our recommendation

Ensure that people and their families where appropriate are always actively involved in a comprehensive assessment and ongoing regular reviews of their needs and wishes.



Progress

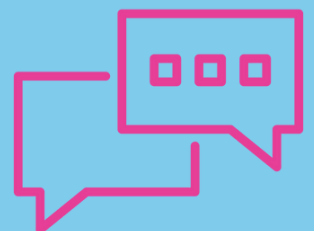
Leeds City Council are currently working with social work teams to see how they can work differently with care providers and people in receipt of care to agree to a new way of working. This would involve an initial meeting with the person receiving care, family members if appropriate, and relevant others such as the Care Provider, social worker etc. This would enable people to plan and agree on the care and support package together from the outset and build in any flexibility.

Our recommendation

We made several recommendations around ensuring that social work teams and home care agencies were asking the right questions during assessments and reviews relating to social and emotional needs, cultural and religious preferences and communication needs.

Progress

Leeds City Council are working with social workers to make sure that they are asking the right questions during assessments and reviews and that cultural awareness is embedded within the process.



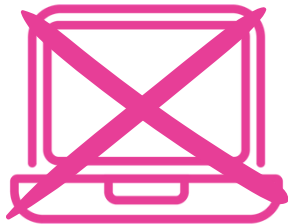
Progress so far...

Our recommendation

For self-funders who don't go through the Leeds City Council assessment process, there should be a clear accessible statement of what they can expect as a citizen of Leeds from any newly commissioned service.

Our recommendation

People should be involved in their own care on an ongoing basis including being involved in regular reviews of their care. Care plans should always be proactively provided in a format that is accessible to the individual (not assuming that a person has digital access).



Our recommendation

Be aware of what 'personalised care' means in practice for people in receipt of care and ensure that the necessary things are in place to deliver it.



Progress

Leeds City Council are looking to work across the home care market to promote a common approach to care and support at home.



Progress

Leeds City Council recognise the need for ongoing involvement that doesn't stop at the assessment stage. They want a person's care and support to be reviewed more regularly with the person in receipt of care (and family carers if appropriate) to ensure that it is efficient, necessary and meeting people's needs.

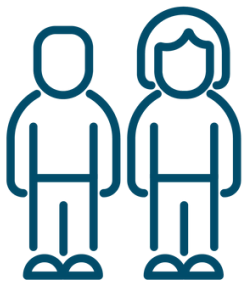
Progress

Leeds City Council recognises that care needs to move away from a focus on tasks to more flexible and personalised support. They are talking to care providers and social workers about how best to do this. They want professionals to take the time to find out about people's needs, preferences and life history and build this into assessment processes. Leeds City Council have used the Healthwatch report to inform a consultation with care workers, with a particular focus on personalisation of care.

Progress so far...

Our recommendation

Ensure that providers have flexibility around visit times according to people's changing needs and that there is good communication with people when visit times have to change.



Our recommendation

Consistency and continuity of staff in care teams and better-supported access to the local community.

Our recommendation

Introduce a requirement for all care workers to wear name badges.



Our recommendation

Improve the current billing system by making sure that people get regular bills on at least a monthly basis in a format that is accessible to them.

Progress

Leeds City Council will test how flexibility works in practice and have rules in place for ensuring providers communicate changes appropriately.



Progress

Leeds City Council are proposing to specify that care providers employ people who will be working in a specified local area so they can build relationships with people receiving support and get to know what's in the local community.

Progress

Leeds City Council propose to write into the new service specification that care workers should wear name badges.

Progress

Leeds City Council is introducing an automated billing system whereby people will be billed on a monthly basis according to their allocated hours and increased transparency and information on bills.



Progress so far...

Our recommendation

Improve the pay, conditions and career structure of care staff to attract and retain more people in the role. This includes things such as providing good training, supervision and support, manageable workloads and progression routes.



Our recommendation

There were several recommendations in our report around improving training for care workers.



Our recommendation

Ensure that providers and / or Leeds City Council is asking people in receipt of home care and their family members for their feedback about the quality of the care, on at least an annual basis.

Progress

Leeds City Council have shared the Healthwatch report with the Unions. In the new service, they want care workers to be paid appropriately for the time they are at work. For example, paying staff for shifts, and propose to survey staff regularly to ensure this is happening. They are also exploring ways of encouraging more people to move into and stay in care work such as training people to undertake low level health tasks, introducing more senior roles, and provision of advanced training etc. They are working with providers to encourage values-based recruitment and stress the need for regular supervision.

Progress

Leeds City Council are currently designing a training programme that they will expect all staff to go through. This will include training around specific conditions (e.g. dementia). They would like to ensure that people's lived experience is included in the training so that workers understand the perspective of people who receive support.

Progress

The requirement to regularly assess levels of satisfaction with the service will be built into the contracts.

Progress so far...

Our recommendation

Monitor that care companies and Leeds City Council have clear and accessible ways of dealing with complaints and concerns that are proactively shared with people in receipt of home care services and their family members.



Our recommendation

Involve people in receipt of home care and their family carers in future opportunities to shape services, systems, communications and contract compliance.

Progress

As well as making sure its own complaints process is clear and accessible, Leeds City Council will ensure providers have a clear contact point and complaints policy that are shared with people as soon as the service starts.



Progress

Leeds City Council have committed through Healthwatch Leeds to involve people in the procurement process for the Community Health and Wellbeing Service as well as reviewing plans to monitor providers. Opportunities will include input into the questions to ask providers, involvement in reviewing documents such as contracts and service specifications and evaluating bids.

What's next?

Our work doesn't stop here! We are going to keep working with Leeds City Council and panel members to make sure that care at home keeps getting better and that our recommendations are implemented.

You can read the Changing Home Care report on our website by visiting www.healthwatchleeds.co.uk/reports-recommendations/2023/home-care-2022/

If you would like the report or this leaflet in a different format such as print or audio, please get in touch. Call 0113 898 0035, email info@healthwatchleeds.co.uk or text 07717 309 843.