

Liverpool Care Matters

healthwatch
Liverpool

Carers Voucher Scheme Report September 2018

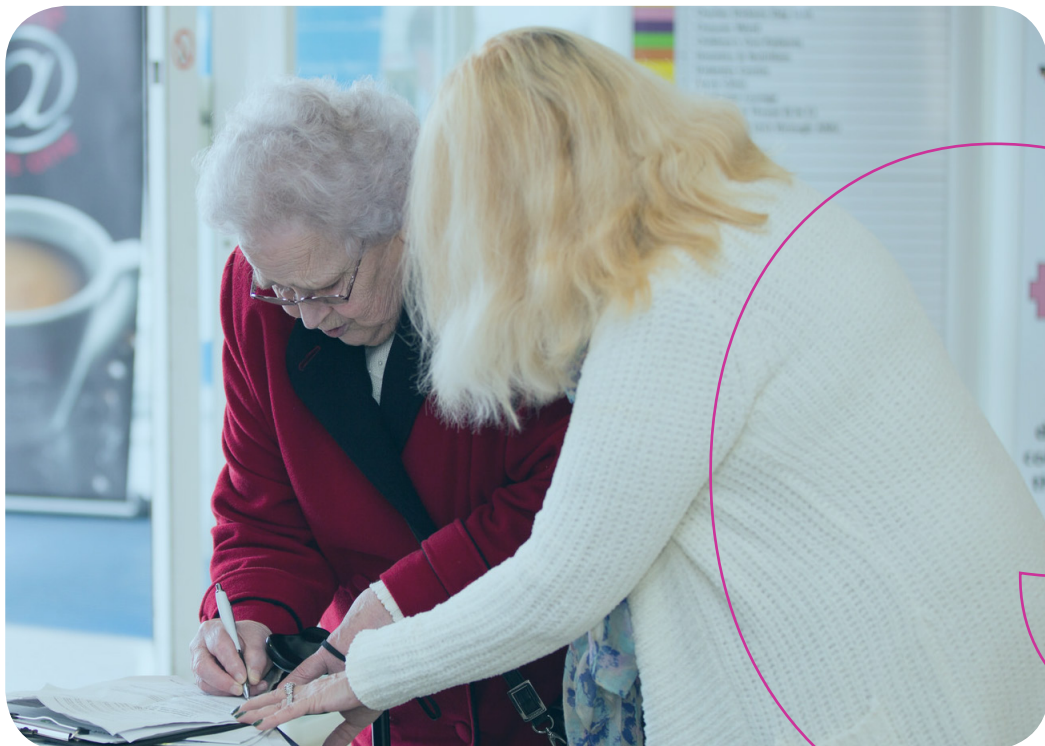


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Background and methodology

Terminology

This report makes use of terms which may be unfamiliar to some people. To avoid confusion, here are some definitions of the terms used throughout the report:

Carer

A carer is anyone who cares, unpaid, for a friend or family member who due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction cannot cope without their support.

However, the term “carer” is also often used to describe a care worker. This is somebody who is employed and paid to carry out care tasks such as a member of staff from a care agency.

Both definitions of the term “carer” are used in this report. As a general rule, anything written by Healthwatch Liverpool will use the term “carer” to mean an unpaid carer and we will refer to paid “carers” as either care staff or care workers. Quotations from those who have completed surveys may use the term “carer” to mean either unpaid or paid carers. In such cases the context in which the term is used should give a clear indication as to the intended meaning.

Cared for person

This term is used to describe the person who has care needs i.e. the person being looked after by the carer. Quotations from those who have completed surveys may also use the term “service user”.

Background to the Carers Voucher Scheme

The Carers Voucher Scheme is provided by Liverpool City Council as a service to carers to give them a break from their caring role.

Caring for someone can be a positive and fulfilling experience, however it can also be stressful and tiring. Evidence shows that regular breaks are important for carers to maintain their own health and wellbeing, and to help them continue in their caring role.

Getting regular breaks can be difficult without support as carers are sometimes unable to leave the person they care for alone for any length of time. The cared for person may have a health condition which means they would be unsafe on their own or being on their own may have a negative impact on their wellbeing, for example, due to anxiety.

The scheme involves the carer using vouchers provided by Liverpool City Council to “purchase” replacement care hours from a list of approved provider care agencies. A care worker from the agency visits the cared for person at home for pre-booked appointments to sit with them to ensure their safety and wellbeing whilst the carer has a break.

Eligibility Criteria

There are eligibility criteria to access the scheme as follows:

- The person with care needs (the cared for person) must be over 18 years old and live within the Liverpool City Council area.
- Both the carer and the cared for person must have had an assessment of their needs.
- The assessment of the carer (known as a Carers Supported Self-Assessment) must have identified the carer's need and eligibility for a break and the Carers Voucher Scheme as the most appropriate service to meet that need.
- Both the carer and cared for person must consent to receiving the vouchers and the carer must be able to manage them.
- The scheme is intended to be a "sitting service" only, therefore it is not suitable for cared for persons who may require support with personal care whilst the carer is having a break. Personal care may include tasks such as toileting or prompting medications. The "sitting service" must be delivered in the cared for persons home and cannot be used to take them out anywhere.

If the above criteria are met then the carer will be referred to the Carers Voucher Scheme. The Carers Supported Self-Assessment will determine how much of a break the carer needs in terms of hours per week. The baseline for vouchers is five per week but, depending on needs, the allocation can be increased.

Using the Carers Voucher Scheme

After the carer has been referred to the scheme, they will be sent out a set number of paper vouchers throughout the year. Each voucher can be used to "purchase" anything from one hour up to their allocation in that week, however for bank holidays each hour is doubled. The number of vouchers sent out is determined by the carer's level of need as evidenced through the Carers Supported Self-Assessment.

The carer is provided with a list of provider care agencies who accept the vouchers. These agencies are domiciliary care agencies who have agreed to be part of the scheme. The carer is required to contact one or more of the provider care agencies. They are able to contact as many of the agencies as they wish.

The provider care agency will carry out their own assessment which will involve visiting the home to meet with the carer and cared for person to complete the necessary paperwork including a risk assessment. Once this has been completed the carer can begin to use the scheme through the provider care agency/agencies.

When the carer wishes to make use of the scheme they need to contact the provider care agency/agencies to book the date, time and duration of the appointment. Carers are requested to give the agency at least 48 hours notice when they wish to use the scheme.

At the scheduled time a care worker from the agency will attend the cared for person's home address to sit with the cared for person for the specified time. This will give the carer a chance to have a break from their caring role. The carer can use this time in whatever way they wish.

At the end of the appointment, the carer gives the care worker the required number of vouchers to cover the time spent (one voucher = one hour, except for bank holidays). The care worker then returns these to the agency office where they are used to invoice Liverpool City Council at the agreed rate.

The carer must have a review of their support needs by a Carers Development Worker which is completed on an annual basis during which the ongoing use of the vouchers is discussed.

If the carer experiences any difficulties with using the scheme in the meantime then they can contact Paula Doyle, Carers Officer at Liverpool City Council, for advice and assistance.

Background to this review

The Carers Voucher Scheme has been running since 2002 and was last formally reviewed in 2006. It has therefore been 12 years since the scheme was last reviewed.

Healthwatch Liverpool was approached by Liverpool City Council in April 2018 to carry out a review of the Carers Voucher Scheme. The Council were aware that it had been some time since the last review and were also aware that some carers were referred to the scheme and either never used it or only used it a handful of times before stopping. The Council were keen to find out the reasons for this and if the scheme was still meeting the needs of carers in Liverpool.

Methodology of this review

Desktop research

The first stage of the review was to carry out some desktop research. We were provided with documents related to the scheme by the Council including the report from the previous review in 2006. This gave us some important background information about the scheme such as the process and eligibility criteria. This helped to inform our engagement activities.

At this time we also carried out online research in two areas. The first was to see if there were any reports or studies specifically on the topic of carers voucher schemes. Whilst there are some published reports into breaks for carers we could not find any studies which covered carers voucher schemes in any detail.

The second area of our research was to see if any other local authority areas in the UK operate a similar scheme. We carried out research online and found a handful of other local authorities in the UK which appeared to offer similar schemes based upon information on their websites. We passed on these details to Liverpool City Council who will use these to liaise with the other authorities to share experiences and learning.

Engagement planning

In consultation with the Council we identified four strands of engagement for the review. The strands are as follows:

1. Carers who are registered with the Carers Voucher Scheme

The Council keeps an up to date list of those carers who are registered for the scheme. This list can be subdivided further as follows:

- Carers who use the scheme regularly
- Carers who have used the scheme in the past but not for a while (but remain registered)
- Carers who have been registered with the scheme but have never used it

2. Carers who are not registered with the Carers Voucher Scheme

We chose to include carers who are not registered with the Carers Voucher Scheme as this makes up the majority of carers in Liverpool. We were keen to find out about their experiences, particularly whether or not they are able to get breaks from their caring role and, if so, how they did this.

3. Staff who work with carers in Liverpool

This can be further subdivided as follows:

- Staff employed by Liverpool City Council

This group of staff consists of Social Workers, Social Care Assessors and other professionals who carry out Carers Assessments and can refer into the scheme. These staff are based in various teams across Liverpool.

- Staff employed by Local Solutions Carers Centre

This group consists of staff employed by Local Solutions Carers Centre who provide support to carers and carry out Carers Assessments and can refer into the scheme. These staff are mainly based out of the Liverpool Carers Centre on Mount Vernon Green but cover the whole city.

- Staff employed by Barnardo's

There is one member of staff at Barnardo's who works specifically with Young Adult Carers (carers aged 18 - 25) and can refer into the scheme.

4. Provider care agencies

We were keen to engage with the provider care agencies who accept the carers voucher to hear their views on the scheme.

Once we had identified the four strands of engagement we developed an action plan and timescales which was agreed with the Council.

We decided that the best method of engagement would be to use survey questionnaires. This method allows us to capture people's individual feedback and then put all of the feedback together to identify themes.

Specific survey questionnaires were designed for each strand of engagement. We used mainly open questions to ensure we were capturing qualitative feedback without restricting or leading people.

We produced paper versions of each of the surveys and also an online version which was accessible via the Healthwatch Liverpool website. The online version was a single survey with questions set up to guide people through the survey based on which of the four groups they represented.

At Healthwatch Liverpool we are committed to ensuring that everyone is given the opportunity to share their views and experiences. As such, we recognise that people may need or prefer to engage with us in different ways. For each strand of engagement we offered the following ways in which people could share their views:

- By completing the paper survey and returning in a prepaid envelope
- By completing the online version of the survey
- By completing the survey over the telephone with one of our staff
- By completing the survey in person with one of our staff

We gave explanations of these options on the front page of each of the surveys.

Engagement

Our engagement period for this review ran from June to August 2018. During this time we carried out the following:

1. Carers who are registered with the Carers Voucher Scheme

Surveys were sent out by Liverpool City Council on our behalf on 13 June 2018 to 663 people who were registered with the Carers Voucher Scheme at that time. We included a freepost envelope for surveys to be posted back to the Healthwatch Liverpool office.

Healthwatch Liverpool attended the annual Carers Week event in Williamson Square on 14 June 2018 where we had an information stand. Copies of the survey were available and our staff spoke to carers to see if they were registered with the scheme and if they had received and completed the survey.

The online survey was promoted through our social media. This included a paid-for Facebook promotion. It was also promoted via social media by Liverpool City Council and Local Solutions Carers Centre.

2. Carers who are not registered with the Carers Voucher Scheme

We worked closely with the Local Solutions Carers Centre to engage with carers who are not registered with the scheme. We provided a large number of paper surveys which the Carers Centre staff could give to carers.

As mentioned above, we also attended the Carers Week event to reach carers and the online survey was promoted through social media by ourselves, Liverpool City Council and Local Solutions Carers Centre.

One of our staff attended the Carers Forum meeting at the Local Solutions Carers Centre on 8 August 2018 to promote the engagement.

3. Staff who work with carers in Liverpool

We attended a number of staff team meetings during the engagement period to explain the review and encourage staff to complete the surveys. The meetings covered both Liverpool City Council staff and Local Solutions Carers Centre staff. The member of staff at Barnardo's was spoken to over the telephone to explain the review.

The survey was promoted by emails sent to team managers within Liverpool City Council with a request to cascade the information to their staff. Emails were sent by us and the Commissioning Team within Liverpool City Council.

The survey was also promoted via the Liverpool City Council staff intranet.

As mentioned above, the online survey was promoted via social media by us, Liverpool City Council and Local Solutions Carers Centre.

4. Provider care agencies

Provider care agencies were requested to attend a meeting on 17 July 2018 where we explained the review and encouraged those attending to complete the surveys and cascade the request to their staff.

The Commissioning Team within Liverpool City Council sent emails both before and after this meeting to the provider care agencies to encourage engagement.

The online survey was promoted via social media as previously described.

Responses

The response rate is measured by the number of surveys completed. The numbers for each of the four strands of engagement are as follows:

1. Carers who are registered with the Carers Voucher Scheme



The total number of surveys posted out was 663 so this represents a response rate of 28%.

2. Carers who are not registered with the Carers Voucher Scheme



3. Staff who work with carers in Liverpool



4. Provider care agencies



Responses were received from 11 different providers. 10 were provider care agencies who accept the vouchers. One was from a provider who is not part of the scheme but has an interest in it.

Analysis of responses

The response rate for carers who are registered with the voucher scheme has been good at 28%.

The response rates for the other three strands of engagement have been low.

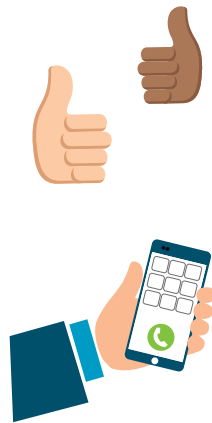
The responses have been collated and analysed using thematic analysis techniques. Despite the low response rates in some areas, there are clear themes which have been identified, many of which link across the different strands of engagement.

These themes will be highlighted and discussed in this report.

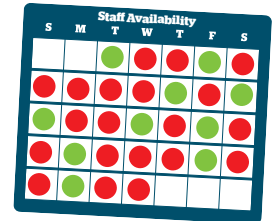
Key findings

Based upon the responses of those who completed the surveys, the key findings for each of the four strands of engagement are as follows:

Carers who have been referred to the voucher scheme



- **Carers who use the scheme regularly report high levels of satisfaction**
- **The main issue with the scheme is a lack of capacity with the provider care agencies**
- **Carers have also highlighted a lack of communication from provider care agencies as a concern**
- **Some carers would like the scheme to be made more flexible to encompass some care tasks such as toileting and medication prompts**



In addition:

- The scheme allows carers to do tasks and take part in activities including attending medical appointments, shopping, and seeing friends and family.
- The scheme gives carers time for themselves and peace of mind knowing that the cared for person is safe.
- A lot of carers report having difficulties with finding a care agency that has availability for visits.
- Carers have also highlighted a lack of communication from provider care agencies as a concern.
- Some carers have reported that provider care agencies don't respond to requests and don't advise them if a pre-arranged appointment is no longer possible.
- Some carers would also like the scheme to cover taking the cared for person out.
- Some carers feel that the vouchers don't give them enough of a break and they would benefit from more time for themselves.

Carers who have not been referred to the voucher scheme



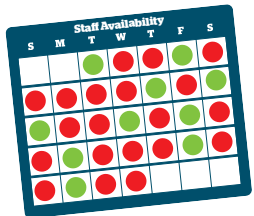
- **The majority of carers are not able to get regular breaks from their caring role**
- **This has an impact on their health and wellbeing. They struggle to have a life outside caring and experience tiredness**
- **Awareness of the Carers Voucher Scheme is low as the majority of carers haven't heard of the scheme**



Staff who work with carers



- **Staff appear to have a good insight into the scheme as their responses match closely with what carers say about the scheme.**



- **Staff say that the scheme enables carers to do tasks and take part in activities. They also say that it gives carers a break from caring and peace of mind.**
- **Staff feel that the main issue with the scheme is a lack of capacity with the provider care agencies.**
- **Some staff have also suggested that the scheme could be extended to encompass care tasks and taking the cared for person out.**



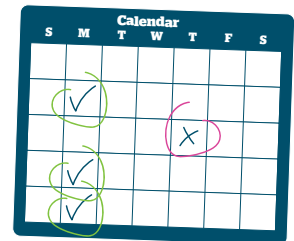
In addition:

- Some staff feel that the referral process for the scheme could be streamlined. A rapid access pathway for those being discharged from hospital has also been suggested.
- One member of staff has suggested that an option for electronic vouchers and bookings would be beneficial for some, particularly younger carers, in addition to the paper vouchers.

Provider care agencies



- **Provider care agencies feel that the scheme gives carers a break, flexibility and peace of mind.**
- **Some care agencies say that regular bookings are easy to manage, however ad hoc bookings can be difficult to manage in terms of staff and availability.**



- **The majority of providers have had to decline a request to use the vouchers due to staff availability.**
- **Some providers would like to be able to offer an expanded service to include personal care tasks.**



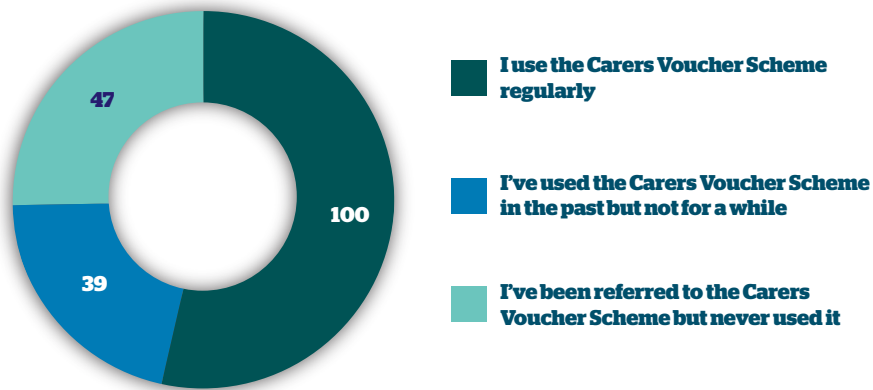
In addition:

- Care agency staff feel the scheme enables them to build closer relationships with the carer and cared for person.
- Some providers would like to see an increased use of technology such as electronic vouchers rather than the current paper vouchers.

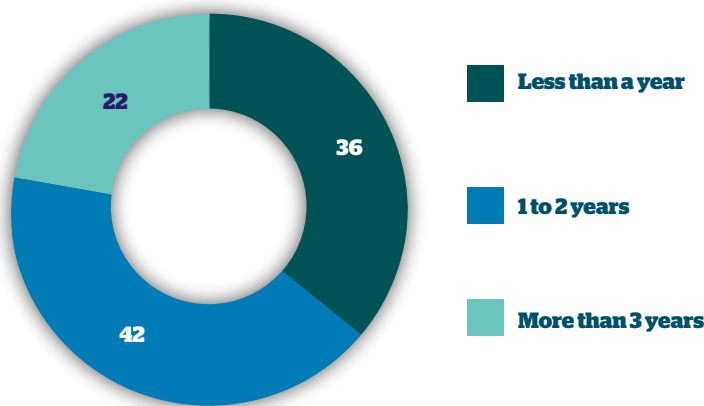
Survey results

Carers who have been referred to the voucher scheme

Which of the following best describes your situation?



If you use the Carers Voucher Scheme regularly, for how long have you been using it?



If you have never used the scheme or not for a while, what are the reasons for this?

We asked this question to find out why some carers had been referred to the scheme and had either never used it or hadn't used it for some time. A free text box was provided for the answer and the responses have been analysed to identify the main themes.

As detailed above, a total of 86 people stated that they had either never used the scheme or hadn't used it for a while. Of the 86 people, 72 people provided a response to this question.

The main themes from the responses are as follows:

Change of circumstances

17 people indicated that their circumstances had changed since being referred to the scheme. The main reasons given were that the cared for person had died or had moved into a care home. Some people indicated that either they themselves had been unwell or the cared for person had been unwell, meaning that they hadn't used the scheme.

Reluctance

11 people who had never used the scheme stated that the cared for person was reluctant to accept care workers supporting them. Some of their comments are as follows:

"My husband won't allow people to "babysit" him."

"The person I care for is not comfortable with others providing care."

"My wife suffers from anxiety and she did not want someone coming in to sit with her."

Three people also stated that they themselves were reluctant to leave the person they care for with care workers. Some of their comments are as follows:

"Not hopeful of appropriate care in my absence."

"Didn't like to leave my husband with strangers."

Service not required

15 people stated that they did not actually need the scheme. Some of their comments are as follows:

"Haven't needed to use them."

"I have managed not to use the scheme."

"My daughter is... happy (most of the time) to be left alone for a couple of hours if I need to go out."

Three people indicated that they had support from family which meant they didn't need to use the scheme. Some of their comments are as follows:

"I have not used the voucher scheme yet because my family sit with their father for me."

"We have never used the scheme as we have a very good and caring family."

Provider care agency capacity

Eight people indicated they had experienced difficulties with finding a care agency to provide the service. Some of their comments are as follows:

"Unable to get anyone for suitable dates, even when given advance notice."

"I cannot get any one to sit in morning time with my mother."

“Care company that provides care for mum very rarely have the staff for sitting service.”

Service unsuitable

Five people found that the scheme did not fit with the needs of the cared for person. Some of their comments are as follows:

“The carers I rang wouldn’t provide a pill prompt! So that’s what I needed.”

“Is not applicable for mother’s care due to social and language...barriers.”

“I thought my daughter would be able to go out with support to give me a break but I rang around various organisations to be told they only do support in the person’s own home which is not what we wanted.”

Issues with process

Three people stated that they had issues with the process of the scheme. Two people were unsure how to use the vouchers and one person found the process too stressful.

“At that point in time I found the whole process too stressful to deal with - having to phone round different providers to see if they had availability.”

“I was allocated a voucher but did not use it due to lack of support and instruction on how to use.”

“Unable to fully understand the scheme.”

Carer too busy

Two people stated they had been too busy to make use of the scheme. Their comments are as follows:

“I have not been able to take advantage of them.”

“I was in a stressful situation and never seemed to have the time to phone around all the different agencies recommended.”

Dissatisfaction with service

One person had not used the scheme for a while as they were dissatisfied with the standard of care provided.

“Standard of care provided - I would not have them in my mother’s home for more time than is necessary.”

What are the good things about the Carers Voucher Scheme?

We asked this question to find out, for those who had ever used the scheme, what they thought was good about the scheme. A free text box was provided for the answer and the responses have been analysed to identify the main themes.

A total of 139 people indicated that they had used the scheme (those who use the scheme regularly and those who have used it in the past). Of the 139 people, 123 people provided a response to this question.

The main themes from the responses are as follows:

Tasks and activities

A large number of people gave details of the tasks and activities that using the voucher scheme allowed them to do. The main tasks and activities mentioned are as follows:

- Shopping (21 people)
- Get out of the house (18 people)
- Seeing friends (ten people)
- Attending medical appointments (nine people)
- Going to the hairdresser (seven people)
- Seeing family (four people)

Other tasks and activities mentioned include reading, walking, visiting the pub, attending a choir, going to the gym and playing bingo.

Some of the comments we received are as follows:

"I can go out with my daughter to get my weekly shopping."

"I did shopping, collected medication, attended my own appointments, etc."

"I have used vouchers for hospital appointments."

"I can plan ahead so that I can go shopping, meet friends for lunch, study part-time at the university. Also I am able to attend Zumba classes."

Peace of mind

27 people stated that the scheme helps to alleviate worry and gives peace of mind as they are able to go out knowing that the cared for person is being looked after by someone. Some of their comments are as follows:

"I couldn't go out of the house before but the vouchers meant I could go out with a free heart not having to worry about my husband."

"They enable me to go out without worrying about my wife's safety."

"I can leave the house knowing my husband is in safe hands."

"Peace of mind - I can leave my husband without worrying."

Time for myself

14 people stated that the scheme gives them time for themselves. Some of their comments are as follows:

"It gives me time for myself."

"I get time to do things for me. I can treat myself."

"The carers voucher scheme lets me get out, giving me some time to myself. Before I had no time to myself."

Care workers

Eight people made positive comments about the care workers who provide the service. Some of their comments are as follows:

"Good standard of agency sitters. Helpful and flexible."

"Lovely caring people."

"Excellent relationship built up with carer."

Company for the cared for person

Eight people stated that the scheme provided company for the cared for person which they felt was beneficial. Some of their comments are as follows:

"Provides additional conversation and someone other than me for my mum to engage with."

"The voucher scheme enables me to have a support worker to look after my husband, occupying him with music and games."

"Company for mum."

Process

Some people made positive comments about the voucher scheme process. The main themes were the scheme being easy to use (five people), receiving the vouchers on time (four people), reliability (three people) and flexibility (three people).

Some of the comments we received are as follows:

"It is a quick and easy way of payment for the carers."

"Vouchers always arrive when needed. So reliable."

"Flexible arrangements possible."

What could be improved, if anything?

We asked this question to find out, for those who had ever used the scheme, what they thought could be improved about the scheme. A free text box was provided for the answer and the responses have been analysed to identify the main themes.

A total of 139 people indicated that they had used the scheme (those who use the scheme regularly and those who have used it in the past). Of the 139 people, 85 people provided a response to this question.

The main themes from the responses are as follows:

Provider care agency capacity

28 people stated that they had experienced issues around provider agency capacity. Many of these people stated that they had contacted provider care agencies to arrange the service but had been told that no care workers were available.

Some of their comments are as follows:

"It took phone calls to 4 different agencies before I could find a fifth one with any vacancies which was quite frustrating."

"I could never get a carer when needed because of staff shortages. I was badly let down on numerous occasions."

"Need more care agencies who could provide the services."

"The companies supplying carers are understaffed. When a carer can't attend, it's chaos."

"Initially it was difficult to find an agency who covered our area and had a carer available. One agency kept me hanging on with promises for months."

"Although I had a lot of vouchers it was very difficult to get carers."

More vouchers

22 people felt that their allocation of vouchers was not enough and stated they would like to have more vouchers.

Some of their comments are as follows:

"More vouchers for extra days."

"Perhaps a few more vouchers being provided."

"We could do with more hours."

"More vouchers - if they are used for a hospital appointment the week's vouchers could be used in one go. 5 hours per week is not a lot."

Communication from care agencies

Nine people felt that communication from the provider care agencies could be improved. Some people described care workers not arriving for prearranged appointments without any prior notification from the agency.

Some of their comments are as follows:

“They sometimes don’t call if the carer can’t attend, so I only know about it when they don’t turn up.”

“They never turn up or never ring back.”

“[the care agency] never seem clear that a ‘sitter’ will turn up. Seems a little hit and miss.”

What difference have the carers vouchers made to your life?

We asked this question to find out, for those who had ever used the scheme, what difference using the carers vouchers had made to their life. A free text box was provided for the answer and the responses have been analysed to identify the main themes.

A total of 139 people indicated that they had used the scheme (those who use the scheme regularly and those who have used it in the past). Of the 139 people, 123 people provided a response to this question.

The main themes from the responses are as follows:

Tasks and activities

A large number of people gave details of the tasks and activities that using the vouchers has allowed them to do. The responses were similar to those received for the previous question (What are the good things about the Carers Voucher Scheme?).

As before, people described being able to get out (12 people), see family (11 people), go shopping (eight people), attend medical appointments (seven people) and see friends (seven people).

Some of their comments are as follows:

“It’s enabled me to babysit my grandson while daughter goes to work.”

“They have given me a chance to meet my friends and feel part of the human race and being able to meet my daughter and grandchildren for coffee now and again.”

“It allows me to work part time.”

“I’ve made friends from an art class I was able to join.”

Peace of mind

26 people stated that the scheme helps to alleviate worry and gives peace of mind as they are able to go out knowing that the cared for person is being looked after by someone. The responses were similar to those received for the previous question (What are the good things about the Carers Voucher Scheme?).

Some of their comments are as follows:

“Peace of mind knowing my infirm and vulnerable wife is not left on her own when I need to go to church or run errands.”

“It has given me freedom and peace of mind.”

“It has given me time to go about knowing my husband is safe.”

Time for myself

21 people stated that the scheme gives them time for themselves. The responses were similar to those received for the previous question (What are the good things about the Carers Voucher Scheme?).

Some of their comments are as follows:

“They give me the chance to have time for myself.”

“A very well deserved 5 hours time for myself to go out.”

“Welcome time to myself.”

Mental health and wellbeing

Nine people stated that the time off afforded to them by the vouchers had improved their own mental health and wellbeing. Some of their comments are as follows:

“Makes me less miserable.”

“Made me feel independent and confident once again. More importantly I feel happier knowing Dad in safe hands. Guilt free is a wonderful state of mind.”

“It gave me a chance to feel normal for a few hours each week.”

Company for the cared for person

Six people stated that the scheme provided company for the cared for person which they felt was beneficial. The responses were similar to those received for the previous question (What are the good things about the Carers Voucher Scheme?).

Some of their comments are as follows:

“My son enjoys time with his regular carer.”

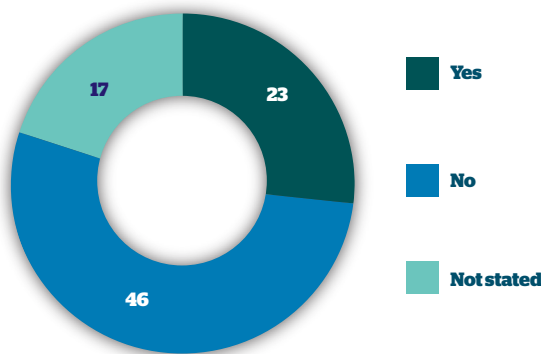
“My husband has a male support worker who does stimulating activities with him: wordsearch, dominoes, Jenga, reading aloud and music.”

Do you get regular breaks from your caring role?

We asked this question, for those who had never used the scheme or hadn't used it for a while, to find out whether people got regular breaks from their caring role.

A total of 86 people indicated that they had either never used the scheme or hadn't used it for a while.

The responses received are as follows:



As illustrated above, the majority of those who responded to this question indicated that they do not get regular breaks from their caring role.

In addition to this, although the question was not intended for them, 19 people who said they use the voucher scheme regularly also stated that they did not get regular breaks from their caring role. This suggests that some people who use the voucher scheme regularly perhaps do not feel that it affords them enough of a break from caring. This links to the fact that, when asked what could be improved, 22 people stated that they would like to have more vouchers.

If yes, please describe how you get a break from caring

As illustrated above, 23 people who had either never used the scheme or not used it for a while indicated that they do get regular breaks from their caring role. We asked this question to find out how people get regular breaks without using the voucher scheme. A free text box was provided for the answer and the responses have been analysed to identify the main themes.

The main themes from the responses are as follows:

Informal support networks

A number of people indicated that they rely on informal support from family (12 people), friends (three people) and neighbours (one person) in order to get regular breaks. Some of their responses included:

“My neighbour takes my daughter to church with them which she seems happy to take part in.”

“My son and his wife stay with their father for me.”

“Arrange with relatives and friends to provide ad-hoc care.”

Other services

Five people make use of other services in order to get a break. Three people stated that the cared for person attends a day centre. Two people pay privately for help. Some of their responses are as follows:

“My wife goes to a day centre twice a week.”

“By paying people including overnight stays occasionally.”

“I pay my cleaner to sit with my husband when I go out once every 2 months with a group of friends.”

Able to leave the cared for person

Four people indicated that they are able to leave the cared for person for periods of time. Some of their responses are as follows:

“I can leave my husband on his own for a limited time provided I write down exactly where I am and when I will return.”

“I can now leave my husband for periods at a time during the day.”

“I can leave my husband for short periods at the moment.”

If no, what impact does not having a break have on your life?

As illustrated above, 46 people who had either never used the scheme or not used it for a while indicated that they do not get regular breaks from their caring role. We asked this question to find out the impact of not having regular breaks. A free text box was provided for the answer and the responses have been analysed to identify the main themes.

Impact on health and wellbeing

17 people stated that not getting regular breaks has a negative impact on their own health and wellbeing. This includes stress (ten people), depression (seven people) and an impact on physical health (three people). Some of their responses are as follows:

“Eventually it affected my health both physically and mentally.”

“I get stressed, depressed, anxious.”

“Am now on medication to help me with the stress.”

Life outside of caring

12 people stated that not getting regular breaks impacts their ability to have a life outside of caring. Some of their responses are as follows:

“I have no social life, no holidays, no free time.”

“Very restrictive lifestyle.”

“It has impacted my relationships with my girlfriend and friends who I hardly see.”

“I have very little time to pursue my own interests and hobbies.”

Tiredness

Nine people stated that they experienced tiredness as a result of not getting regular breaks. Some of their responses are as follows:

“I’m tired all the time.”

“I’m tired and tetchy.”

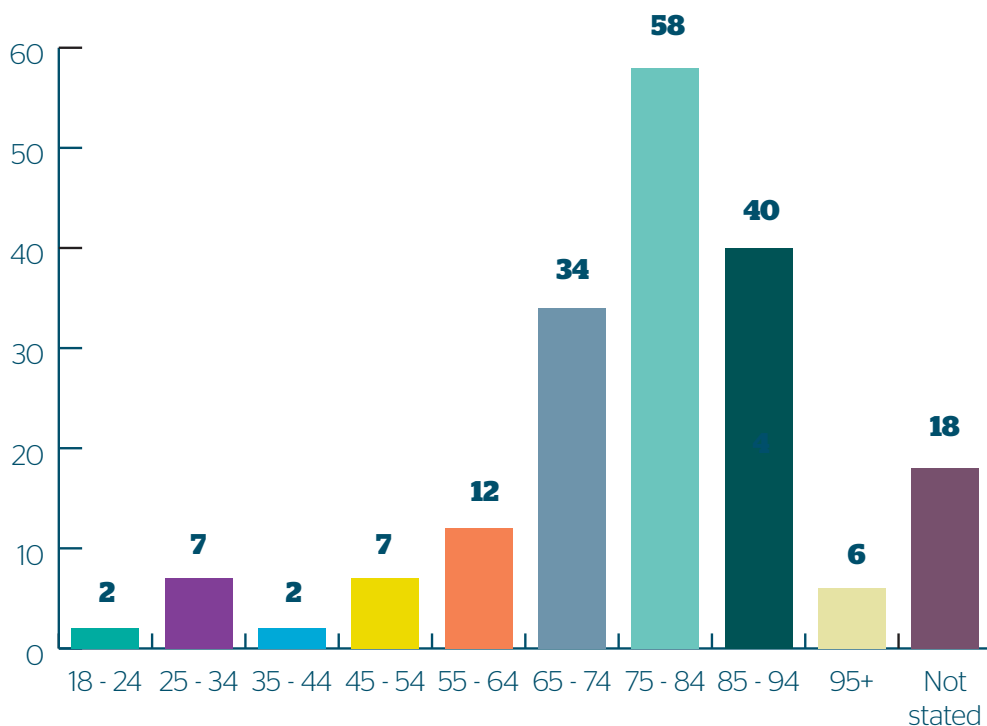
“It makes you feel very tired all the time.”

Details about the cared for person

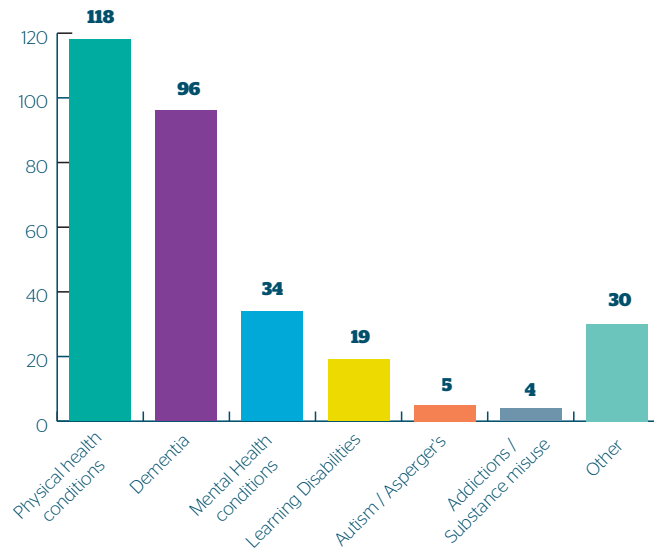
In this section of the survey we asked for basic demographic details about the cared for person. This is to ensure that we have received responses from a wide variety of those who make use of the Carers Voucher Scheme.

Liverpool City Council can compare this data from our survey responses with the data that they hold about those who are registered to use the scheme to see if there are any gaps in responses from certain demographics. This can then be used to inform any future engagement on this topic.

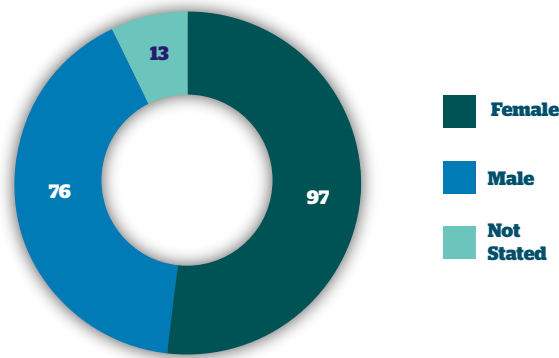
What is their age?



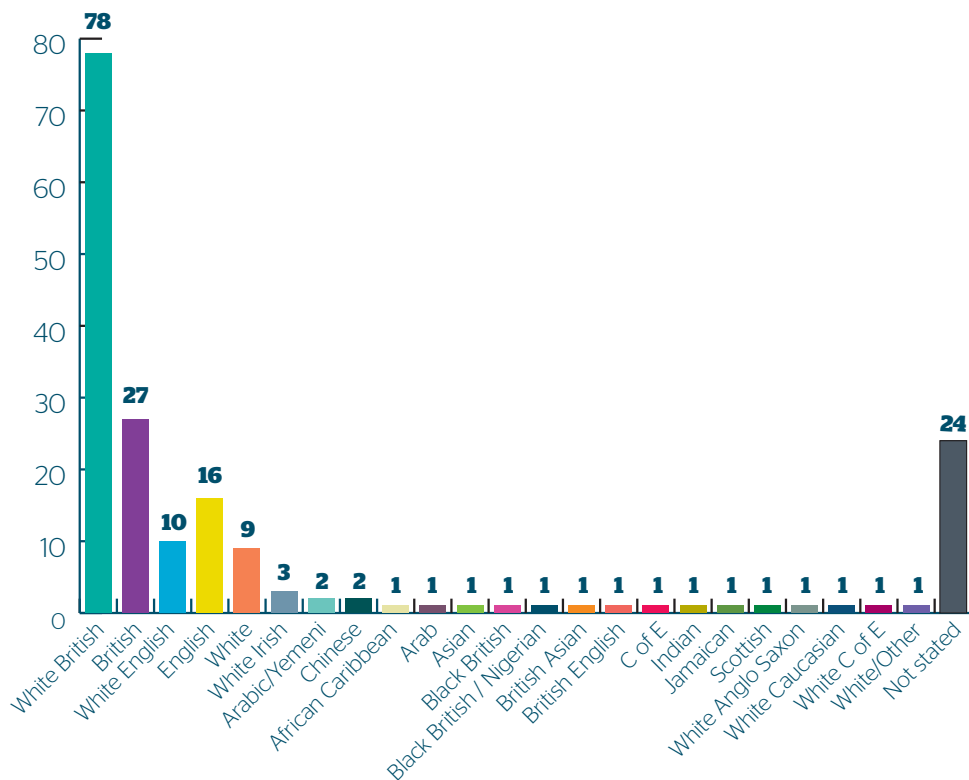
What are their health conditions?



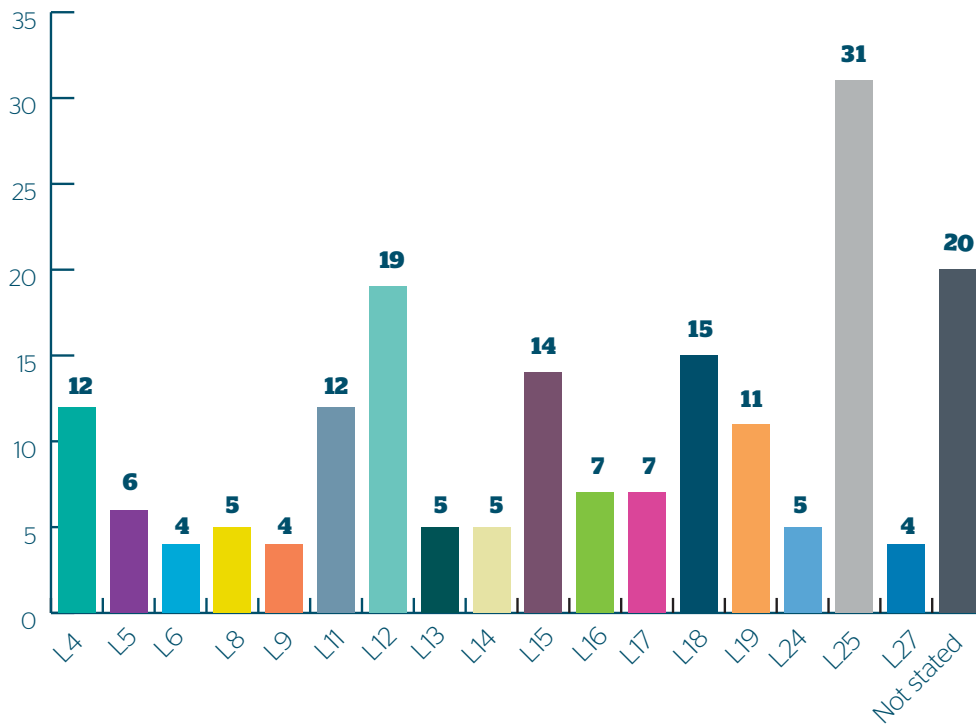
What is their gender?



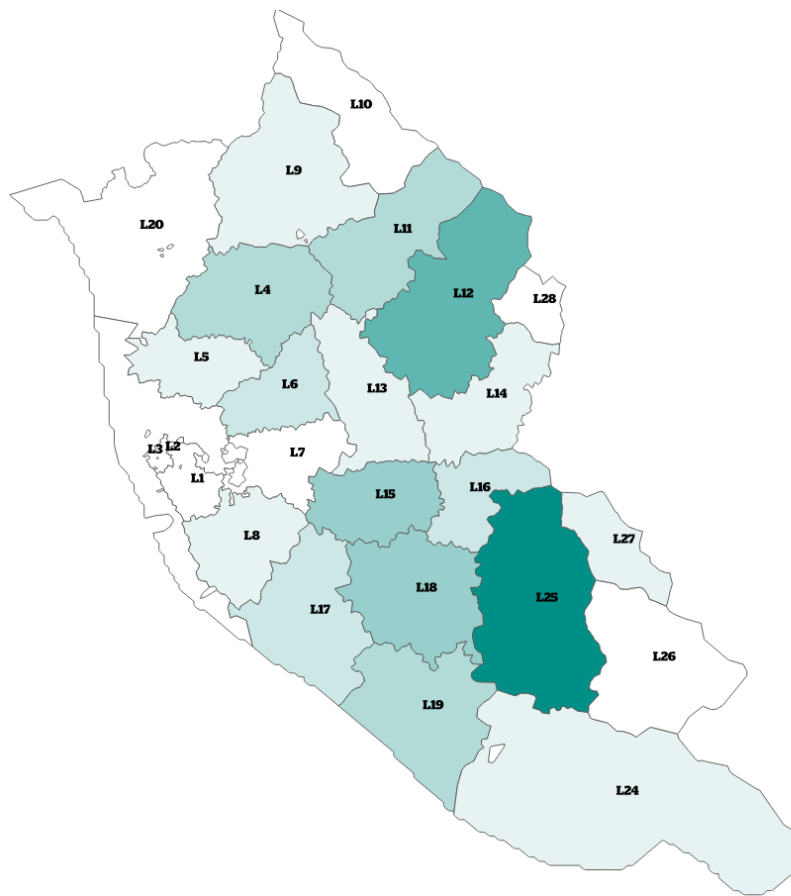
What is their race / ethnicity?



What is the first part of their postcode?



Carers referred to scheme



Is there anything else you would like to tell us?

We asked this question to give people an opportunity to expand upon responses given to the previous questions or raise topics not covered by the previous questions. A free text box was provided for the answer and the responses have been analysed to identify the main themes.

Of the 186 people who completed the survey, 103 people answered this question.

The main themes from the response are as follows:

Gratitude

17 people expressed their thanks and gratitude for the scheme. Some of their responses are as follows:

"I'm very grateful for the help we carers are given here in Liverpool. Thank you very much."

"I'm very grateful for this service."

"I am most grateful to the council for the voucher scheme."

Care workers

15 people made positive comments about the care workers who provide the service. Some of their comments are as follows:

"I have always found the staff very courteous and helpful."

"We are delighted with the carers who come along. They have become part of the family and are very kind with mum, treat her with the greatest respect."

"Carers are pleasant and efficient ladies."

Provider care agency capacity

14 people stated the issues they had experienced with finding a care agency with capacity to provide the service. Some of their responses are as follows:

"The carers voucher scheme is a great idea but in practice it does not work properly because of lack of staff by the care company. I was let down many times."

"I had the care agency telling me when I could use them and when I couldn't so in the end I could not be bothered."

"I am finding it difficult to find agency."

Carers who have not been referred to the voucher scheme

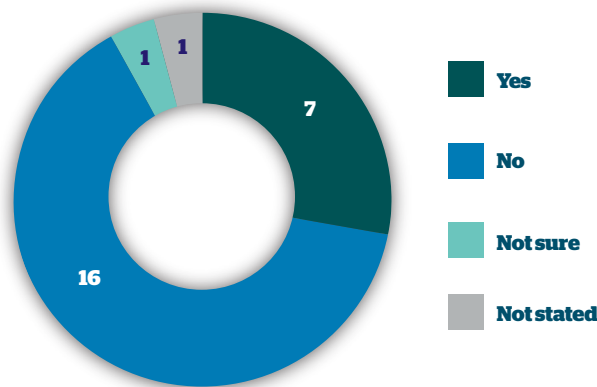
Do you care for an adult who lives in Liverpool?

This was a screening question as the Carers Voucher Scheme is only available for carers where the person they look after is an adult who lives within the Liverpool City Council area. Of the 25 responses we received, all were carers of adults in Liverpool. We did not receive any responses from carers where the cared for person did not live in Liverpool.

Have you heard of the Carers Voucher Scheme?

We asked this question to see how much awareness there is amongst carers about the Carers Voucher Scheme.

The responses received are as follows:

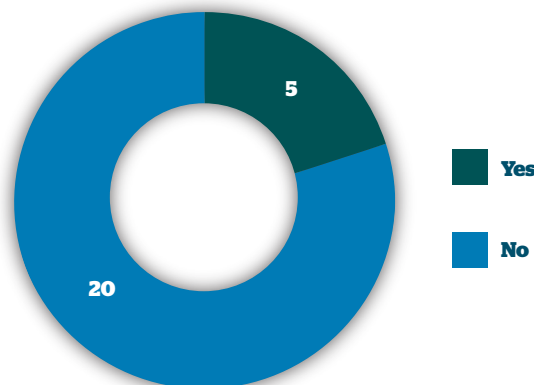


As illustrated above, the majority of those who completed the survey had not heard of the Carers Voucher Scheme.

Do you get regular breaks from your caring role?

We asked this question, for those people who have never been referred to the Carers Voucher Scheme, to find out whether people got regular breaks from their caring role.

The responses received are as follows:



As illustrated above, the majority of those who completed the survey felt they did not get regular breaks from their caring role.

If yes, please describe how you get a break from caring

We asked this question to find out how people get regular breaks without using the voucher scheme. A free text box was provided for the answer and the responses have been analysed to identify the main themes.

Of the five people who indicated that they do get regular breaks from caring, four people answered this question.

The main themes from the responses are as follows:

Able to leave the cared for person

Three people indicated that they are able to leave the cared for person for periods of time. Some of their responses are as follows:

"I am able to leave her for short periods of time."

"Leave for periods of time."

College

One person stated that they get a break when their son (the cared for person) attends college. Their response is as follows:

"When my son goes to college 3 days a week."

If no, what impact does not having a break have on your life?

We asked this question to find out the impact of not having regular breaks. A free text box was provided for the answer and the responses have been analysed to identify the main themes.

Of the 20 people who indicated that they do get regular breaks from caring, 19 people answered this question.

The main themes from the responses are as follows:

Impact on health and wellbeing

Seven people stated that not getting regular breaks has a negative impact on their own health and wellbeing. This includes stress (three people), depression (three people), poor sleep (two people) and an impact on physical health (one person). Some of their responses are as follows:

"I feel that I am becoming depressed."

"Fatigue, poor sleep."

"My GP warned me that I am at high risk of a heart attack, stroke and a mental break down due to the stress."

Life outside of caring

Seven people stated that not getting regular breaks impacts their ability to have a life outside of caring. Some of their responses are as follows:

"I feel lonely. I have no social life."

"Difficult to find opportunities to work and/or study."

"I can't go anywhere for a day trip or a holiday ever."

Tiredness

Four people stated that they experienced tiredness as a result of not getting regular breaks. Some of their responses are as follows:

"I'm knackered!"

"I am tired all the time."

Is there anything else you'd like to tell us?

We asked this question to give people an opportunity to expand upon responses given to the previous questions or raise topics not covered by the previous questions. A free text box was provided for the answer and the responses have been analysed to identify the main themes.

Of the 25 people who completed the survey, 15 people answered this question.

The main themes from the responses are as follows:

Carers Voucher Scheme

Although they are not using the Carers Voucher Scheme, six carers made comments related to the scheme. This includes a desire to find out more information about the scheme (two people) and comments that the scheme would not be applicable for their circumstances (two people). One person stated that they may need to use the scheme in the future and one person stated that they were referred to the scheme several years ago but heard nothing more. Some of their responses are as follows:

"Applied for vouchers and advised would receive them by post. After many calls, four years later was advised vouchers on the way. Still not received them. Hubby now in care home!"

"My husband would need someone to help him to the toilet so this would not be available via the scheme."

"More information would be great."

"I would like someone to take him out rather than him having to be kept in the house. I asked about the carers vouchers and whether they could do this but they said it wouldn't work for what I need."

Negative impact of caring

Five people made comments which described the negative impact that caring has on their lives. This includes the feeling that carers are forgotten about (two people), the financial impact (one person), isolation (one person) and the impact on their physical health (one person). Some of their responses are as follows:

“Carers like myself feel forgotten and not recognised for the service we provide to our loved ones.”

“Very different financial situation to the one I have expected all my life.”

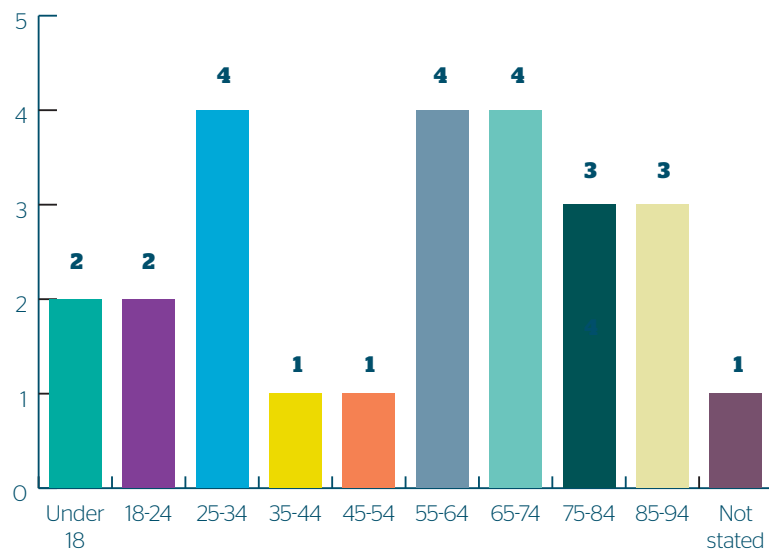
“I am so run down and I feel like a failure.”

Details about the cared for person

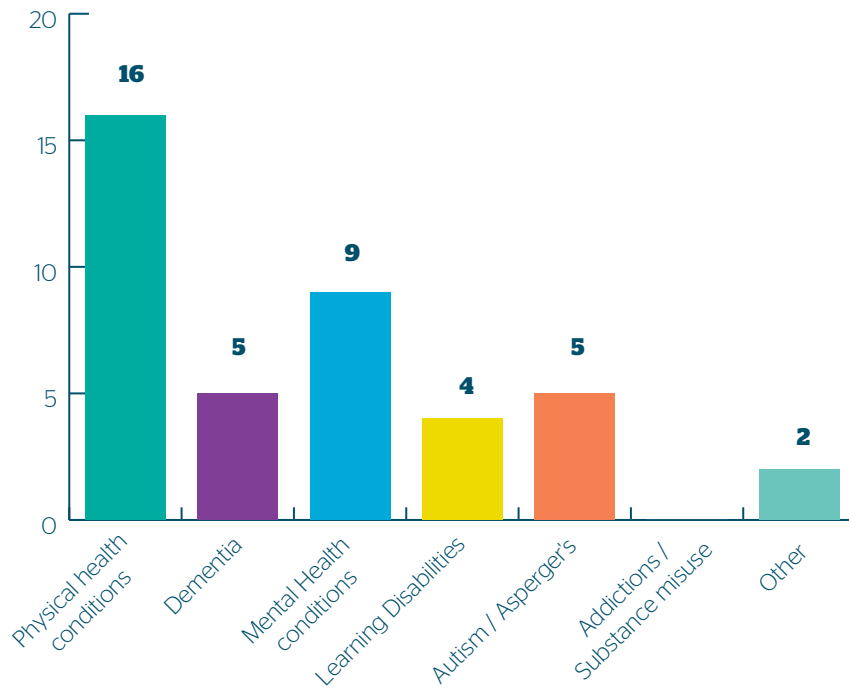
In this section of the survey we asked for basic demographic details about the cared for person. This is to ensure that we have received responses from a wide variety of carers.

Liverpool City Council can compare this data from our survey responses with data that they hold to see if there are any gaps in responses from certain demographics. This can then be used to inform any future engagement on this topic.

What is their age?



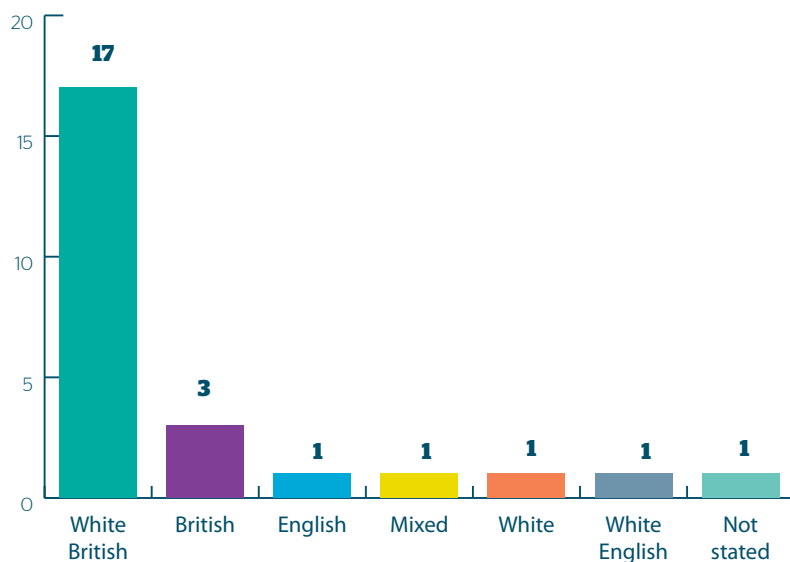
What are their health conditions?



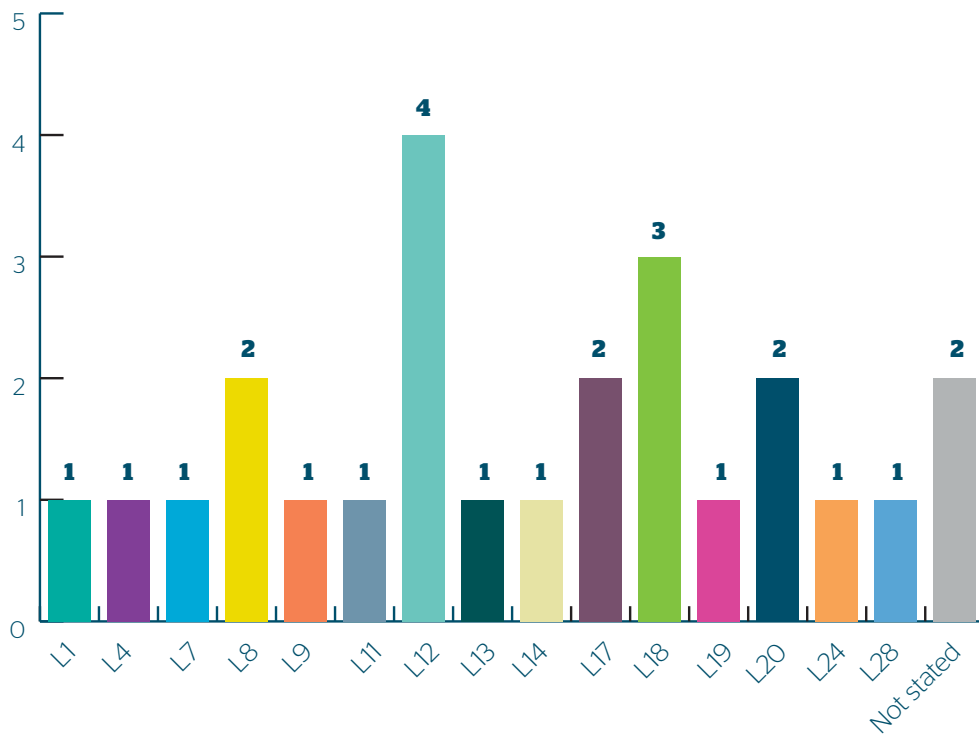
What is their gender?



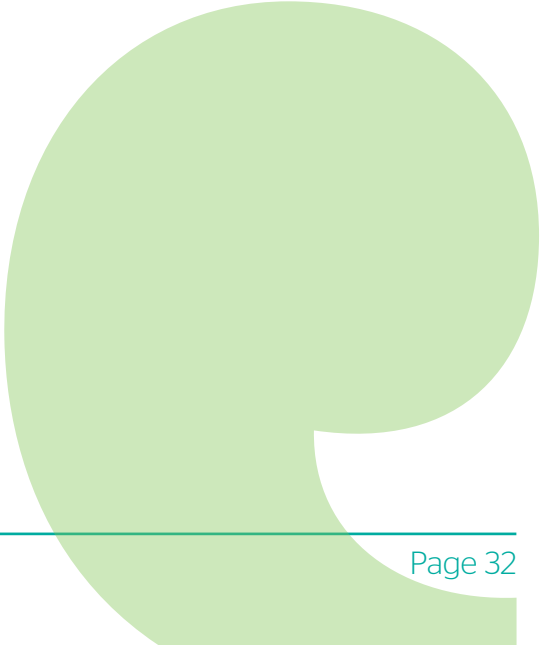
What is their race/ethnicity?



What is the first part of their postcode?



Carers not referred to scheme

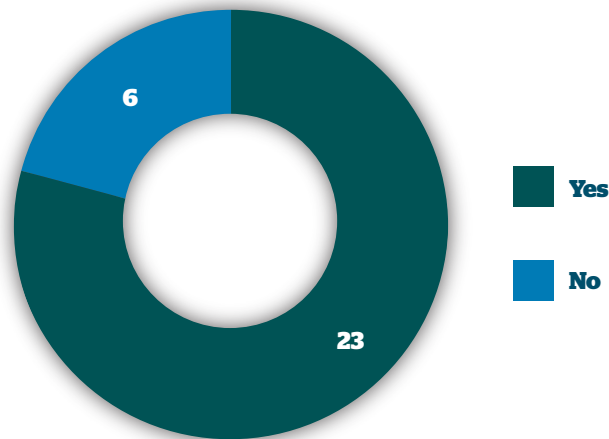


Staff who work with carers

Have you referred any carers to the Carers Voucher Scheme?

We asked this question to see whether people refer into the Carers Voucher Scheme. Of the 29 people who completed the survey, all answered this question.

The responses received are as follows:



If no, why not?

We asked this question to see, for those who don't refer into the Carers Voucher Scheme, if there was a particular reason for this. A free text box was provided for the answer and the responses have been analysed to identify the main themes.

As illustrated above, six people indicated that they have not referred into the Carers Voucher Scheme. All of the people stated that they had not referred into the Carers Voucher Scheme as doing so is not part of their job role.

Some of the people stated that they worked in administration roles whilst others were hospital-based Social Workers who indicated that the quick turnaround of hospital patients meant that they did not refer into the scheme.

If yes, what is good about the Carers Voucher Scheme for the carer?

We asked this question to find out, for those who had referred into the Carers Voucher Scheme, what they thought was good about the scheme from the point of view of the carer.

Of the 23 people who had referred to the Carers Voucher Scheme, 22 people answered this question.

The main themes from the responses are as follows:

Break from caring

16 people stated that the scheme allows carers to have a break (13 people), respite (five people) and time for themselves (four people). Some of their responses are as follows:

“The voucher scheme enables the carer to have a much needed break from the caring role.”

“The carer is able to have short respite breaks from their caring role.”

“It enables carers to have respite away from there caring role.”

Peace of mind

Six people stated that the scheme helps to alleviate worry and gives carers peace of mind as they are able to go out knowing that the cared for person is being looked after by someone. Some of their responses are as follows:

“...also providing peace of mind to carer when out accessing their respite break.”

“...knowing that the cared for persons is safe whilst they can have some time away.”

“gives them peace of mind.”

Tasks and activities

Five people stated that the vouchers allow carers to carry out tasks and take part in activities. Some of their responses are as follows:

“...attending their own appointments, partaking in an activity, meeting up with friends/family...”

“...do things they value and enjoy, able to meet up with friends which reduces isolation and improves their own health and wellbeing, also gives them time to attend their own appointments...”

“It provides them with the ability to make plans to see friends and take part in activities away from caring role.”

What is good about the Carers Voucher Scheme for you as a practitioner?

We asked this question to find out, for those who had referred into the Carers Voucher Scheme, what they thought was good about the scheme from their point of view as a practitioner.

Of the 23 people who had referred to the Carers Voucher Scheme, 22 people answered this question.

The main themes from the responses are as follows:

Provide support to carers

18 people stated that the scheme enables them to provide some support to carers. Some of their responses are as follows:

"It offers us a way to support carers who are providing a significant role."

"It means I have something positive to offer a carer that supports them effectively."

"The scheme supports adult social care to look at different ways to support the carer."

Reduce the need for other services

Three people felt that the scheme enables carers to continue in their caring roles and this reduces the need for other formal care services. Some of their responses are as follows:

"...reduces the need for care services and carer breakdown."

"...help to prevent, reduce and delay the need for people getting into long term formal services."

"It means the carer is more likely to be able to continue in their caring role and so less resources are required."

Free

Two people stated that the scheme being free and not means tested is positive for them. Their responses are as follows:

"No issues to overcome financially."

"It's free not means tested."

What could be improved about the Carers Voucher Scheme for the carer?

We asked this question to find out, for those who had referred into the Carers Voucher Scheme, what they thought could be improved about the scheme from the point of view of the carer.

Of the 23 people who had referred to the Carers Voucher Scheme, 22 people answered this question.

The main themes from the responses are as follows:

Provider care agency capacity

11 people felt that a lack of provider care agency capacity was an issue for carers. Some of their responses are as follows:

"Most often the agency list provided cannot always facilitate the vouchers when the carer contacts them."

"Feedback from carers is that it can be difficult to obtain the care from agencies."

“More care agencies available who could provide the service and more carer available within those agencies.”

Flexibility with tasks and times

Eight people stated that the scheme should be extended to encompass taking the cared for person out, personal care tasks and greater flexibility around times and bookings. Some of their responses are as follows:

“Possible option to take cared for person into the community giving carer time at home.”

“It only provides a sitting service and for a lot of carers the person they care for needs help to get to the toilet therefore the scheme will not work for them.”

“If the vouchers can be used for light tasks such as making a sandwich, drink and supporting the individual.”

“In a number of cases when a carer has tried to use vouchers flexibly this has not worked for them, even when appropriate notice has been given to the care provider.”

Use of technology

One person felt that the addition of technology for bookings would be useful. This has been identified as a theme as technology is a topic which the provider care agencies have mentioned in some of their responses (see next section).

The response from the person is as follows:

“At present, care providers accredited to the scheme are contacted via phone by the carer to request the use of vouchers. It may be helpful if this could also be done electronically via an app or website booking system. However, not replace the current telephone system, as this may work best for some carers.”

What could be improved about the Carers Voucher Scheme for you as a practitioner?

We asked this question to find out, for those who had referred into the Carers Voucher Scheme, what they thought could be improved about the scheme from their point of view as a practitioner.

Of the 23 people who had referred to the Carers Voucher Scheme, 22 people answered this question.

The main themes from the responses are as follows:

Process

Eight people stated that they felt aspects of the process for the scheme could be improved. This includes comments that the process could be streamlined (six people). Two people suggested that the vouchers should be made available without having to complete a full Carer’s Assessment. Some of their responses are as follows:

“Maybe streamline the referral process that enable the carer to access the vouchers.”

“Making it a quicker process as we have to sometimes ring to find out updates on a regular basis as the carer is in need...”

“I feel that the voucher scheme can be improved by ensuring the referrals go through as quickly as possible, the referral process can be lengthy.”

“I think there should be a quick access route for people being discharged from hospital and carers are providing substantial support.”

Provider care agency capacity

Seven people felt that a lack of provider care agency capacity was an issue for them as well as for carers. Some of their responses are as follows:

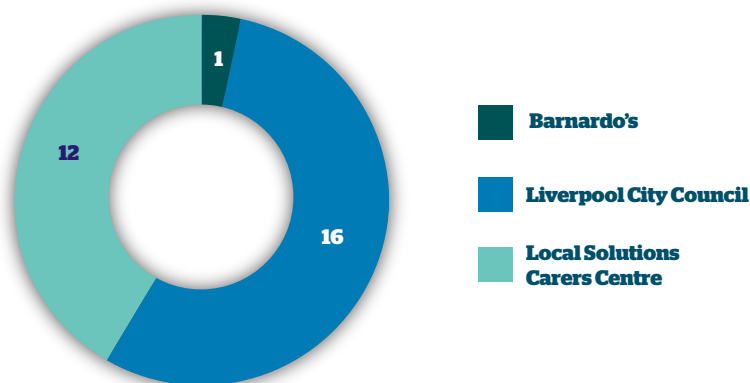
“Agencies that are fully committed to the carers voucher scheme as I am often contacted due to carers being let down.”

“Some carers struggle to find a provider with capacity to accept vouchers and so this may need looking into as it does cause further frustration when a service is offered but cannot be used.”

Name of employer

We asked people to tell us the name of their employer to ensure that we received feedback from across the different services involved with supporting carers in Liverpool.

The responses received are as follows:



Is there anything else you'd like to tell us?

We asked this question to give people an opportunity to expand upon responses given to the previous questions or raise topics not covered by the previous questions. A free text box was provided for the answer and the responses have been analysed to identify the main themes.

Of the 29 people who completed the survey, seven people answered this question.

The responses received matched with one of the themes identified from previous questions as follows:

Staff who work with carers

Provider care agency capacity

Four people reiterated the issues faced by carers in relation to provider care agency capacity. Some of their responses are as follows:

“The difficulties can be with...the ability of the agencies to facilitate the service fully to enable carers to have full confidence in the scheme.”

“It is very frustrating when assessing for carer’s vouchers as the carer is very excited about the scheme but I know that they will get the vouchers quickly but will not get to use them.”

“My families can never make plans because it is so unreliable. The carer has to fit around the company’s availability. Carers become frustrated and give up.”

Provider care agencies

What is good about the Carers Voucher Scheme for the carer?

We asked this question to find out what provider care agencies think is good about the scheme from the point of view of the carer.

Of the 16 people who completed the survey, all of them answered this question.

The main themes from the responses are as follows:

Break from caring

11 people stated that the scheme allows carers some respite (seven people), time for themselves (four people), the chance to have a break (one person) and time to relax (one person). Some of their responses are as follows:

“The carer has time to themselves, to relax and have a break.”

“Brief respite for family members.”

“Enables the carer to have time away from caring for a loved one.”

“It is much needed respite.”

Flexibility

Five people stated that the scheme gives carers flexibility. Some of their responses are as follows:

“The Carer Voucher Scheme is flexible and can be used for the time the carer needs.”

“They can use the voucher whenever or with whoever they choose.”

“Flexibility for extra support.”

Peace of mind

Two people stated that the scheme gives carers peace of mind. Their responses are as follows:

“Workers are recruited and trained by agency - so the carer may feel reassured that the individual has passed background checks, etc.”

“Gives carers peace of mind.”

What is good about the Carers Voucher Scheme for you as a provider?

We asked this question to find out what provider care agencies think is good about the scheme from their point of view.

Of the 16 people who completed the survey, 15 answered this question.

The main themes from the responses are as follows:

Co-ordination and booking

Eight people stated that the scheme can work well for them in relation to co-ordinating the visits and making bookings. Some of their responses are as follows:

“Easier to co-ordinate the calls/care.”

“If the support request is for a regular time each week then it works well.”

“We can work with the carer on a suitable time and we will only agree to calls that we can do.”

“We can support by having regular carers who can fill “down time” in usual rota to deliver service.”

Building relationships

Five people stated that the scheme allows the care staff to build a relationship with the carer and/or cared for person. Some of their responses are as follows:

“...gives our staff the ability to learn more about service users and spend quality time with them, thus developing better relationships.”

“Assisting/enabling friendship and companionship.”

“I get to spend quality time with one person and hopefully build a friendship.”

Flexibility

Two people stated that the scheme gives them flexibility. Their responses are as follows:

“Flexible to work to service users and family needs.”

“Scheme can be delivered flexibly.”

What could be improved about the Carers Voucher Scheme for the carer?

We asked this question to find out what provider care agencies think could be improved about the scheme from the point of view of the carer.

Of the 16 people who completed the survey, 15 answered this question.

The main themes from the responses are as follows:

Use of technology

Five people suggested that introducing an electronic system as an alternative to paper vouchers would be beneficial for carers. Some of their responses are as follows:

“Electronic vouchers also available if staff struggle to get vouchers in to the office.”

“...invoicing process being paperless (no more paper vouchers).”

“Make it electronic!”

Flexibility with tasks

Three people felt that extending the scope of the scheme to encompass care tasks or taking the cared for person out would be beneficial for the carer. Some of their responses are as follows:

“The voucher scheme could be extended to be used towards purchasing Dementia Day Care for the person living with dementia.”

“Some feedback we have had is that the Scheme only allows for a sitting support service rather than other homecare or domestic tasks. Other ways of supporting the carer could be explored.”

“More flexibility in how the voucher may be used to provide the service which would also benefit the individual being cared for e.g. the scheme will allow a sitting service in the home but will not pay for a carer to take the person to community events which will improve their lives by keeping them connected and stimulated.”

Information for carers

Two people felt that carers needed more information about how to use the scheme. Their responses are as follows:

“Better identification of which providers are able to provide the service in their localities.”

“We find that some carers don’t know what the vouchers can be used for i.e. asking if personal care is involved and sleepovers.”

What could be improved about the Carers Voucher Scheme for you as a provider?

We asked this question to find out what provider care agencies think could be improved about the scheme from their point of view.

Of the 16 people who completed the survey, 15 answered this question.

The main themes from the responses are as follows:

Use of technology

Six people suggested that introducing an electronic system as an alternative to paper vouchers would be beneficial for carers. Some of their responses are as follows:

“With new technology available it does seem outdated that a paper voucher is used.”

“Making the vouchers electronic instead of paper based.”

Payment and invoicing

Two people suggested that the invoicing and payments system could be improved and made quicker. Their responses are as follows:

“Invoicing can be tedious due to long processing format.”

“We as a company have to wait to get paid, so quicker payments would be better.”

Information for carers

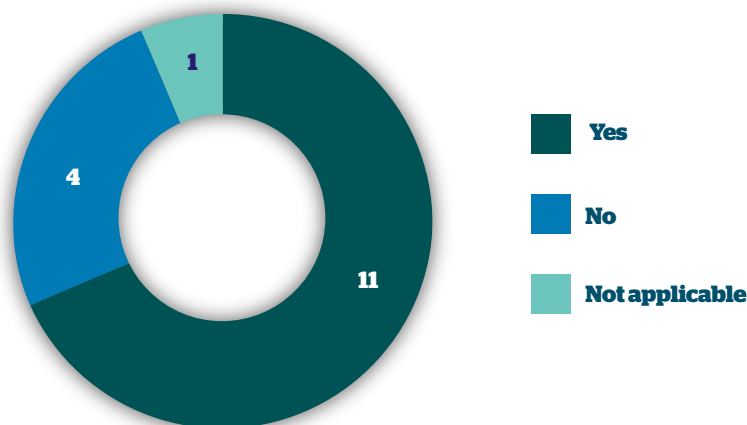
One person felt that carers needed more information about how to use the scheme. Their response is as follows:

“Instructions as to what a voucher service is for. I am continually asked for carers to take service users out into the community or to clean property during a sitting service.”

Have you ever had to decline a request for care from somebody using carers vouchers?

We asked provider care agencies if they had ever had to decline a request for care from somebody using carers vouchers. We asked this as anecdotal evidence prior to our engagement suggested that this may be an issue.

The responses received are as follows:



If yes, why?

We asked this question to see, for those who had declined a request for care from somebody using carers vouchers, if there was a particular reason for this. A free text box was provided for the answer and the responses have been analysed to identify the main themes.

As illustrated above, 11 people indicated that they had declined a request for care. Of the 11 people, all answered this question.

The main themes from the responses are as follows:

No capacity

Eight people stated they had declined a request for care due to a lack of capacity with care workers. Some of their responses are as follows:

“No capacity to fulfil the client’s needs.”

“Capacity and availability of staff.”

“Out of an area that we have carer capacity.”

Out of area

Two people stated they had declined a request for care as the person lived outside of the area they cover. Their responses are as follows:

“Out of area.”

“Service user lives out of our area.”

Care tasks

One person stated they had declined a request for care as giving medications was required and such care tasks are not covered by the scheme. Their response is as follows:

“I was asked to give meds which as a sitter am not allowed to do.”

Is there anything else you'd like to tell us?

We asked this question to give people an opportunity to expand upon responses given to the previous questions or raise topics not covered by the previous questions. A free text box was provided for the answer and the responses have been analysed to identify the main themes.

Of the 16 people who completed the survey, four people answered this question.

The main themes from the responses are as follows:

Good service

Two people commented that the Carers Voucher Scheme is a good service. Their responses are as follows:

“Overall a very good service.”

“This is a lovely way for families who are stressed to have some “me” time knowing that their loved one is safe and being looked after, and we as a company are happy we have a small part in making this happen.”

Flexibility

One person stated that providing an ad hoc service was tricky and that regular bookings were easier to manage in terms of staffing. Their response is as follows:

“...it can be difficult to manage if the time/day of the vouchers is used week to week ad hoc. We fare much better when we agree a set time and day for the service as we can plan it in and arrange regular worker/s.”

Conclusions

This review has highlighted a number of key themes, many of which are linked to all four strands of engagement.

Carers who use the voucher scheme regularly report generally high levels of satisfaction. Many of the responses included detailed descriptions of the positive effect of using the vouchers. Some carers reported being able to do essential tasks which they would otherwise struggle to manage. This includes attending their own medical appointments, shopping and household tasks. Carers also described being able to access social and leisure opportunities including seeing family and friends. Others described being able to have a much needed break and having time for themselves.

The review has highlighted a significant issue around the availability of care staff to deliver the service. Some carers have given up trying to use the scheme due to problems with finding a care agency with availability. Some of the carers who use the scheme regularly have described these kind of issues. Responses from staff who work with carers have also mentioned this as a concern.

This issue is further evidenced by the fact that the majority of provider agencies who responded have had to decline a request for care, often due to issues of staff availability. Some providers have stated that regular bookings are more manageable in terms of planning staff availability, whereas ad hoc bookings can be tricky. This approach may work well for some carers, however it is unlikely to be suitable for all, particularly those who need more flexibility when it comes to dates and times.

Some carers have stated that they would like the scheme to be extended to include care tasks. At present the scheme is intended to be a "sitting service" only. Some carers have found this to be a barrier if the cared for person needs, for example, assistance with toileting or a medication prompt. Staff have also raised this as an issue as well as provider care agencies, some of whom seem willing to take on the extra tasks as part of an extended service.

Staff and provider care agencies have suggested that technology could be incorporated into the scheme such as introducing electronic vouchers. One member of staff felt that this would be beneficial for younger carers in addition to the paper vouchers. The provider care agencies have suggested that electronic vouchers should be introduced as a replacement to the paper vouchers. However, it should be noted that none of the carers who responded stated this.

This report will be submitted to Liverpool City Council for their consideration. We hope that the insights provided in this report will help to inform improvements to the scheme. However, any changes will need to be carefully considered as the scheme is already working well for a large number of carers who use it regularly.

About Healthwatch Liverpool

Healthwatch Liverpool is the independent champion for people who use health and social care services in Liverpool. We're here to make sure that those running services put people at the heart of care.

One of our main purposes is to understand the needs, experiences and concerns of people who use health and social care services and to speak out on their behalf.

As part of a national network made up of local Healthwatch organisations in every local authority area of England and Healthwatch England, the national body, our work contributes to a nationwide perspective of health and social care services.

At Healthwatch Liverpool we also provide a dedicated information and signposting service which helps to put people in touch with services and activities that can help maintain and improve their health and wellbeing.



Appendix A - Copy of surveys used

Survey for people who are registered with the Carers Voucher Scheme



Tell us what you think about the Carers Voucher Scheme

Healthwatch Liverpool is an independent patient organisation. We gather feedback from people who use health and social care services to find out what they think.

We have been asked by Liverpool City Council to gather feedback from people who have been referred to the Carers Voucher Scheme. The Council will use this feedback to make decisions about how this service is run and whether any changes or improvements are needed.

We are contacting you as we understand that you have at some point been referred to the Carers Voucher Scheme. You may or may not have actually used the service.

Please find overleaf a short survey. We would be grateful if you could complete this and return it to us using the enclosed freepost envelope.

The surveys are anonymous but there is a section to give your name and contact details if you are happy for us to contact you for a further discussion. We would very much like to speak to as many carers as possible, so please do fill in this section if you're happy to talk to us. We can arrange a conversation over the phone at a time convenient to you.

Please be assured that any feedback you give will be in the strictest confidence and will be anonymised before being included in our report to the Council. Any identifiable information that you provide to us will be securely destroyed at the end of this engagement exercise. Feel free to be as honest and open as you like with your feedback.

You can complete the survey online if you prefer. Please visit our website, www.healthwatchliverpool.co.uk, and click on the link for the Carers Voucher Scheme survey.

If you have any questions, or if you would like to complete the survey over the phone with one of our team, then please give us a call on **0300 77 77 007**. It's a local rate call but we're happy to call you back. We are available from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday. Outside of normal office hours please leave a message and we will get back to you at a convenient time.

If you are unable to use the phone then we may be able to arrange a face to face appointment with you to go through the survey. If this is the case then please email us at enquiries@healthwatchliverpool.co.uk or write to us using the enclosed freepost envelope.

Please turn over to take the survey and return using the FREEPOST envelope enclosed

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If you have never used the scheme or haven't used it for a while:

7. Do you get regular breaks from your caring role? Yes No

8. If yes, please describe how you get a break from caring (For example, you can leave the person you look after for periods of time, you can arrange family / friends to stay with them etc)

9. If no, what impact does not having a break have on your life?

These questions are about the person you get the vouchers for. We don't ask for any personally identifying information - all the feedback you give is anonymous.

Their age? Prefer not to say

Their health conditions? Please tick all that apply

- Physical health conditions
- Dementia
- Mental health conditions (excluding dementia)
- Learning Disabilities
- Autism/Asperger's
- Addictions/Substance Misuse
- Other (please specify)

Their gender?

Their race / ethnicity?

The first part of their post code (eg L8, L13 etc)

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1. Which of the following best describes your situation?

- I use the Carers Voucher Scheme regularly
- I've used the Carers Voucher Scheme in the past but not for a while
- I've been referred to the Carers Voucher Scheme but never used it

2. If you use the Carers Voucher Scheme regularly, for how long have you been using it?

- Less than a year
- 1 to 2 years
- More than 3 years

3. If you have never used the scheme or not for a while, what are the reasons for this?

If you have ever used the scheme:

4. What are the good things about the Carers Voucher Scheme?

5. What could be improved, if anything?

6. What difference have the carers vouchers made to your life?

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Is there anything else you'd like to tell us?

All the feedback you give is anonymous, however you can choose to give us your contact details. Your contact details will be kept confidential and won't be shared with any other organisations.

- I am happy for Healthwatch Liverpool to contact me, if necessary, to discuss my answers to the survey in more detail
- I would like to be sent a copy of the report when it's published

Name

Address

Email address

Telephone number

Thank you for taking part in this survey!
Please return via the FREEPOST envelope enclosed

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Survey for carers who are not registered with the Carers Voucher Scheme



Do you care for an adult in Liverpool?

Healthwatch Liverpool is an independent patient organisation. We gather feedback from people who use health and social care services to find out what they think.

We have been asked by Liverpool City Council to gather feedback from carers about the Carers Voucher Scheme. The Council will use this feedback to make decisions about how this service is run and whether any changes or improvements are needed.

You may have heard of the Carers Voucher Scheme or you may not. Either way, if you care for an adult in Liverpool, we would be grateful if you could complete the short survey overleaf.

The surveys are anonymous but there is a section to give your name and contact details if you are happy for us to contact you for a further discussion.

Please be assured that any feedback you give will be in the strictest confidence and will be anonymised before being included in our report to the Council. Any identifiable information that you provide to us will be securely destroyed at the end of this engagement exercise. Feel free to be as honest and open as you like with your feedback.

You can complete the survey online if you prefer. Please visit our website, www.healthwatchliverpool.co.uk, and click on the link for the Carers Voucher Scheme survey.

If you have any questions, or if you would like to complete the survey over the phone with one of our team, then please give us a call on **0300 77 77 007**. It's a local rate call but we're happy to call you back. We are available from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday. Outside of normal office hours please leave a message and we will get back to you at a convenient time.

If you are unable to use the phone then we may be able to arrange a face to face appointment with you to go through the survey. If this is the case then please email us at enquiries@healthwatchliverpool.co.uk or write to us at:

Healthwatch Liverpool
4th Floor
151 Dale Street
Liverpool
L2 2AH

Please turn over to take the survey

Page 1

1. Do you care for an adult who lives in Liverpool?

Yes No

2. Have you heard of the Carers Voucher Scheme?

Yes No Not sure

3. Do you get regular breaks from your caring role? Yes No

4. If yes, please describe how you get a break from caring (For example, you can leave the person you look after for periods of time, you can arrange family / friends to stay with them etc)

5. If no, what impact does not having a break have on your life?

6. Is there anything else you'd like to tell us?

Page 2

These questions are about the person you care for. We don't ask for any personally identifying information - all the feedback you give is anonymous.



Their age? Prefer not to say

Their health conditions? Please tick all that apply

- Physical health conditions
- Dementia
- Mental health conditions (excluding dementia)
- Learning Disabilities
- Autism/Asperger's
- Addictions/Substance Misuse
- Other (please specify)

Their gender?

Their race / ethnicity?

The first part of their post code (eg L8, L13 etc)

All the feedback you give is anonymous, however you can choose to give us your contact details. Your contact details will be kept confidential and won't be shared with any other organisations.

- I am happy for Healthwatch Liverpool to contact me, if necessary, to discuss my answers to the survey in more detail
- I would like to be sent a copy of the report when it's published

Your Name

Your Address

Your Email address

Your Telephone number

Thank you for taking part in this survey!

Page 3

Survey for staff who work with carers in Liverpool



Do you work with carers in Liverpool?

Healthwatch Liverpool is an independent patient organisation. We gather feedback from people who use health and social care services to find out what they think.

We have been asked by Liverpool City Council to gather feedback about the Carers Voucher Scheme. The Council will use this feedback to make decisions about how this service is run and whether any changes or improvements are needed.

As a practitioner who works with carers we would be grateful if you would complete the short survey overleaf.

The surveys are anonymous but there is a section to give your name and contact details if you are happy for us to contact you for a further discussion.

Please be assured that any feedback you give will be in the strictest confidence and will be anonymised before being included in our report to the Council. Any identifiable information that you provide to us will be securely destroyed at the end of this engagement exercise. Feel free to be as honest and open as you like with your feedback.

You can complete the survey online if you prefer. Please visit our website, www.healthwatchliverpool.co.uk and click on the link for the Carers Voucher Scheme survey.

If you have any questions, or if you would like to complete the survey over the phone with one of our team, then please give us a call on **0300 77 77 007**. It's a local rate call but we're happy to call you back. We are available from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday. Outside of normal office hours please leave a message and we will get back to you at a convenient time.

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151 Dale Street
Liverpool
L2 2AH

Please turn over to take the survey

Page 1

1. Have you referred any carers to the Carers Voucher Scheme?

Yes No

2. If no, why not?

If yes:

3. What is good about the Carers Voucher Scheme *for the carer?*

4. What is good about the Carers Voucher Scheme *for you as a practitioner?*

5. What could be improved about the Carers Voucher Scheme *for the carer?*

6. What could be improved about the Carers Voucher Scheme *for you as a practitioner?*

Name of employer

Liverpool City Council
 Local Solutions
 Barnardo's

LCC Office base:

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Is there anything else you'd like to tell us?

All the feedback you give is anonymous, however you can choose to give us your contact details. Your contact details will be kept confidential and won't be shared with any other organisations.

I am happy for Healthwatch Liverpool to contact me, if necessary, to discuss my answers to the survey in more detail

I would like to be sent a copy of the report when it's published

Your Name

Your Address

Your Email address

Your Telephone number

Thank you for taking part in this survey!

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Survey for provider care agencies



Tell us what you think about the Carers Voucher Scheme

Healthwatch Liverpool is an independent patient organisation. We gather feedback from people who use health and social care services to find out what they think.

We have been asked by Liverpool City Council to gather feedback about the Carers Voucher Scheme. The Council will use this feedback to make decisions about how this service is run and whether any changes or improvements are needed.

We are keen to hear what you think as a care provider who accepts the carer vouchers, therefore we would be grateful if you could complete the short survey overleaf.

The surveys are anonymous but there is a section to give your name and contact details if you are happy for us to contact you for a further discussion.

Please be assured that any feedback you give will be in the strictest confidence and will be anonymised before being included in our report to the Council. Any identifiable information that you provide to us will be securely destroyed at the end of this engagement exercise. Feel free to be as honest and open as you like with your feedback.

You can complete the survey online if you prefer. Please visit our website, www.healthwatchliverpool.co.uk, and click on the link for the Carers Voucher Scheme survey.

If you have any questions, or if you would like to complete the survey over the phone with one of our team, then please give us a call on **0300 77 77 007**. It's a local rate call but we're happy to call you back. We are available from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday. Outside of normal office hours please leave a message and we will get back to you at a convenient time.

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L2 2AH

Please turn over to take the survey

Page 1



1. What is good about the Carers Voucher Scheme *for the carer?*

2. What is good about the Carers Voucher Scheme *for you as a provider?*

3. What could be improved about the Carers Voucher Scheme *for the carer?*

4. What could be improved about the Carers Voucher Scheme *for you as a provider?*

5. Have you ever had to decline a request for care from somebody using carers vouchers?

Yes No

6. If yes, why?

7. Name of provider / agency

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Is there anything else you'd like to tell us?

All the feedback you give is anonymous, however you can choose to give us your contact details. Your contact details will be kept confidential and won't be shared with any other organisations.

- I am happy for Healthwatch Liverpool to contact me, if necessary, to discuss my answers to the survey in more detail
- I would like to be sent a copy of the report when it's published

Your Name

Your Address

Your Email address

Your Telephone number

Thank you for taking part in this survey!

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Appendix B - Response from Liverpool City Council

Thank you to Healthwatch Liverpool for their support in putting together this comprehensive report on Liverpool City Council's carer voucher scheme. It was good to hear that the majority of carers accessing the carers voucher scheme find it supports them in their caring role. However, we acknowledge that there are improvements that could be made to the service. The contents of this report will be used to improve the quality of the carer voucher scheme and ensure it is an effective service fit for the future and one that meets the needs of all carers. We look forward to working with Healthwatch Liverpool in the near future.

Jane Weller
Commissioning and Contract Manager