

Homecare Quality Check project findings

The Homecare Quality Check Project carried out 59 inspections during the period between 1st March 2015 and 31st March 2016. Joan Thomas, the Co-ordinator of the project shares her findings.

Homecare is provided in people's homes. Users of Homecare are not often given the opportunity to comment in detail about the service they receive so the aim of the project was to provide that opportunity and to give a voice to those using Homecare.

As an independent project not associated with any service provider, the project gave service users the opportunity to safely comment about their Homecare in a face to face interview. We think this gives a much more accurate picture than a questionnaire or a brief telephone conversation with the agency that provides the service.

The project aimed to find out what was most important to users of Homecare, what worked and didn't work for them and how in their eyes, the service could be improved. It was not intended to monitor particular Homecare agencies but to identify issues and trends. All responses were therefore anonymised.

Our Volunteer Quality Checkers / Lay Inspectors received comprehensive training before they went out to talk to people about what they thought of their Homecare. To find out more about this, what we looked at during our visits and how we recorded our findings, see supplementary document (a).

To find out more about what people had to say about the Homecare they receive, see supplementary document (b).

We also ran a Homecare Workers forum in October 2015 in recognition of the very valuable work they do and to find out what they had to say about Homecare. To find out more about the event, what Homecare workers said and how we compared this to what service users said, see supplementary document (c)

We have shared our findings with, and worked in partnership with Southwark Council who are in the process of re-commissioning their Homecare. As key stakeholders, some of the people we interviewed have been participating in an ongoing forum for service users and/or their family carers. The forum has a major role in addressing the issues identified in the Homecare Quality Check project and also in informing and improving Homecare.

The project was funded by the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation and much has been learnt from this pilot which provides a solid foundation from which to continue. Southwark Council will be funding our Lay Inspection scheme for both Homecare and Care Homes so we will soon be recruiting Volunteer Lay Inspectors for both Homecare and Care Homes. Details will follow soon.

If you would like to speak to Joan Thomas about the project or about becoming a Volunteer Lay Inspector, email her on joan.thomas@ageukands.org.uk or ring on **020 7358 4076**. Please note that Joan works 2 days a week so may take a few days to respond to your query.