

Quality Checkers Pilot Project Summary

Introduction – why we did the pilot project



In Autumn 2014 Healthwatch Wiltshire asked Wiltshire People First to help them make contact with hard to reach groups mainly people with learning difficulties.



Wiltshire People 1st (WPF) is the user led self-advocacy organisation who work across the county, to promote the rights and inclusion of people with learning difficulties in Wiltshire.



The aim of the project was to provide people with learning difficulties the opportunity to check out the quality of registered residential care homes, focusing on providers of dementia services for people with learning difficulties and other needs.



Wiltshire People First designed the Quality Checker project, to complement and run alongside Healthwatch Wiltshire's Enter and View programme

Scope of project and recruitment:



Quality Checkers

WPF sent out to a range of services and social groups raising awareness of Quality Checkers project and inviting volunteers with learning difficulties to get involved.



8 People with Learning Difficulties were invited for interview. They were asked about their experience of using services, why they wanted to volunteer, what they felt they could offer, and what they would like to gain from this experience, as we were keen to build on their self-confidence and develop new skills.

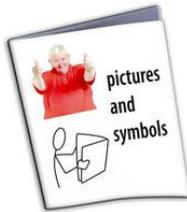
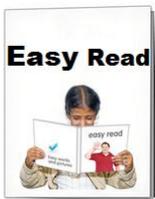
The pilot Quality Checkers project sought answers to the following:



Is the service accessible to people with Learning Difficulties?



Are the staff friendly and understand the need of users with a learning difficulty and dementia?



Is information displayed in a format that is accessible?



Does the service treat people with LD with dignity and respect and like all other people



Does it give users of the service/residents the power to exercise their rights – to have choice and control?

DBS Checks:



The successful people were offered the post of volunteer (trainee) Quality Checkers and it was a requirement that everyone would undergo a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS check).



We were unprepared for the amount of time such checks would take, mainly due to the Quality Checker applicants finding it difficult to gather the required documents and submitting them within a set timescale.



Quality Checker volunteers had to take part in training workshops and to show by the end of them an understanding of the basic values and principles of the code of conduct for making non-intrusive visits to care services.

Training:



The training programme was run over 4 weeks using easy to read course materials, the 6 Keys to Citizenship (S Duffy) as a guide, along with materials adapted from Healthwatch Wiltshires Enter & View.



At the end of the training, Certificates and Identification badges were awarded to the Quality Checkers, by a Healthwatch Wiltshire representative and the Wiltshire People First Director. This showed the successful completion of the training.

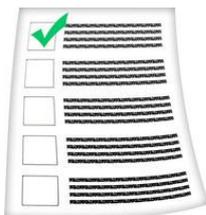


The next task was to set up times for the visits with providers of Learning Difficulties and dementia services.



The teams would be made up of 1 supporter, and 2 Quality Checker volunteers, although occasionally due to illness just one Quality Checker was available to undertake a visit with the supporter.

Visit Check list



The visits were carried out using a checklist with a number of things to observe, tick off or comment on as they went around, including:



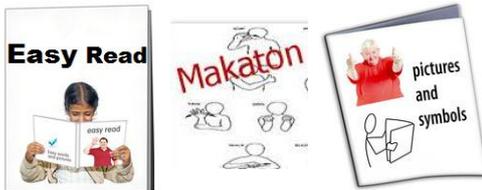
1. Are the staff listening to what people are saying?



2. Are staff speaking for people or are people speaking for themselves?



3. Is there evidence that people get out and about? (e.g. can you see post cards or photos of outings, a mini bus or people talk about a trip out)



4. Is there any evidence that people are helped to communicate better with aides, easy read documents, Makaton signing

5. Are staff treating people and their belongings with respect?



Wherever possible the Quality Checkers would speak to the residents of the home or service.

Service Visit Reports



After each visit, the Quality Checkers team found a quiet place where they were able complete the checklists and make notes. Visit reports could then be written.

Summary of visits and key observations



A total of 11 visits were made, 1 service dropped out at the last minute and it was not possible to rearrange alternative dates to suit the provider, although several attempts were made.



On reviewing the reports and listening to the feedback from the Quality Checkers teams, it was felt that the most of the services were happy to be involved in this pilot.



It was not so straight forwards setting up visits with all of the services however, where communication systems should have been better.



Overall, the visits were felt to be a positive experience and the Quality Checker team received warm welcomes from staff and residents alike.



A small number of recommendations have been made to improve services for residents, but based on the observations of a short visit, all of the homes appeared to be providing a good service with some providing a very good quality service, all of the homes appeared to be treating people well and respecting their needs preferences and wishes

Recommendations arising from Visits to Service Providers:



1. Improve communication within each service so messages are not lost or confused.



2. All residential homes to be accessible – with level or ramped access into buildings and around the home, doors wide enough for those using mobility aids.



3. More Information for residents - and in easy read formats e.g. display menus using words and pictures or symbols, notice board activities etc.
4. Some homes appeared to be much better than others at providing information and communicating with residents.
5. Easy Read Information standards should be agreed and included in service accreditation.

Quotes from Wiltshire People 1st Quality Checkers:

'I really enjoyed training to be a quality checker and going out on the visits'.



'I enjoyed the visits and my confidence got better and better with each visit'.

"I liked being part of this project, having the training to become a Quality Checker and doing a visit, it's really helped me get new skills and understand things better... it's also been good to see what life is like for people living in homes too".

"I learnt what to look for and how to speak to people....this will be useful in other things I do"

This is a summary of the report written by Wiltshire People 1st.

Please contact Angie Carmichael (Director) for more information or a pdf of the full report.

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