



Healthwatch Thurrock

Adult Social Care Consultation Report November 2015

Contents

- 1 Introduction.
- 2 Methodology.
- 3 Sheltered Housing Complexes Visited with Dates.
- 4 Other Groups engaged with.

MAIN REPORT

- 5 Total number of respondents to the survey by Sheltered Housing Complex/Group/Event.
- 6 Responses to Survey questions to proposed changes.
- 7 Additional views on making a full charge Emergency Careline Services.
- 8 Additional views on charging more for short breaks.
9. Additional views on Thurrock Council not paying for equipment under £50.
10. Views gathered on the full consultation at Elizabeth Gardens.
11. Suggestions on improving the quality and reducing the cost of Day Care and the Carer's service.
12. Views of Residents of Elizabeth Gardens on Extra Care services.
13. Suggestions made by respondents on how to improve services.

CONCLUSION

RECOMMENDATIONS



1. Introduction

Healthwatch Thurrock gathered independent views in regard to the Thurrock Borough Council Consultation on proposed changes to Adult Social Care to:

- Establish the impact on the elderly the proposed changes in Adult Social Care which include:-
 - A) Charges for adult social care services.
 - B) Equipment and adaptations costing less than £50
 - C) The provision of Extra Care Housing
- Highlight recommendations and suggestions made by service users on improving the Services.

2. Methodology

The methodology used in this consultation included visiting all the Sheltered Housing Complexes over a period of 12 weeks at Coffee Mornings and Afternoon Tea events to engage with a large number of people. Other groups in the Community were also engaged with including the Over 60's group at the Thurrock Rugby Club, and TOP club at the South Ockenden Centre. A few of the consultation forms were sent to Healthwatch by Post. The easy read forms were used because the Elderly respondents found them very easy to engage with apart from Elizabeth Gardens and Kynoch Court where the full consultation documents were used at their request.

3. Sheltered Housing Complexes visited with Dates

No	Sheltered Housing Complex	Dates
1	Airey Neave Court	20/10/2015
2	Mahoney Hall	22/10/2015
3	Harty Close	26/10/2015
4	Piggs Corner	27/10/2015
5	Frederick Andrews Court	28/10/2015
6	Alexandra Court	3/11/2015
7	The Rowans	24/11/2015
8	Arthur Barnes	4/11/2015
9	Freeman Court	5/11/2015
10	St Anne's Court	6/11/2015
11	Collier Court	9/11/2015
12	Doug Siddons	10/11/2015
13	Lansbury Gardens	11/11/2015
14	Mulberry Drive	11/11/2015
15	Crown Court	12/11/2015
16	Kynoch Court	12/11/2015
17	The Sycamores	13/11/2015
18	Helford Court	16/11/2015
19	Elizabeth Gardens	16/11/2015
20	Rookery Court	17/11/2015
21	Alf Lowen Court	19/11/2015
22	Dove Court	24/11/2015
22	Delargy Close	30/11/2015
23	Vigerons Way	30/11/2015
24	Benyon Court	3/12/2015
25	O'Donoghue House	3/12/2015



4. Other Groups Engaged with and Events

No	Other Groups/Event	Dates
1	South Ockenden Centre	3/11/2015
2	Tilbury Hub	30/11/2015
3	Post	
4	Over 60s Club, Thurrock Rugby Club	5/11/2015
5	Healthwatch Event	1/12/2015





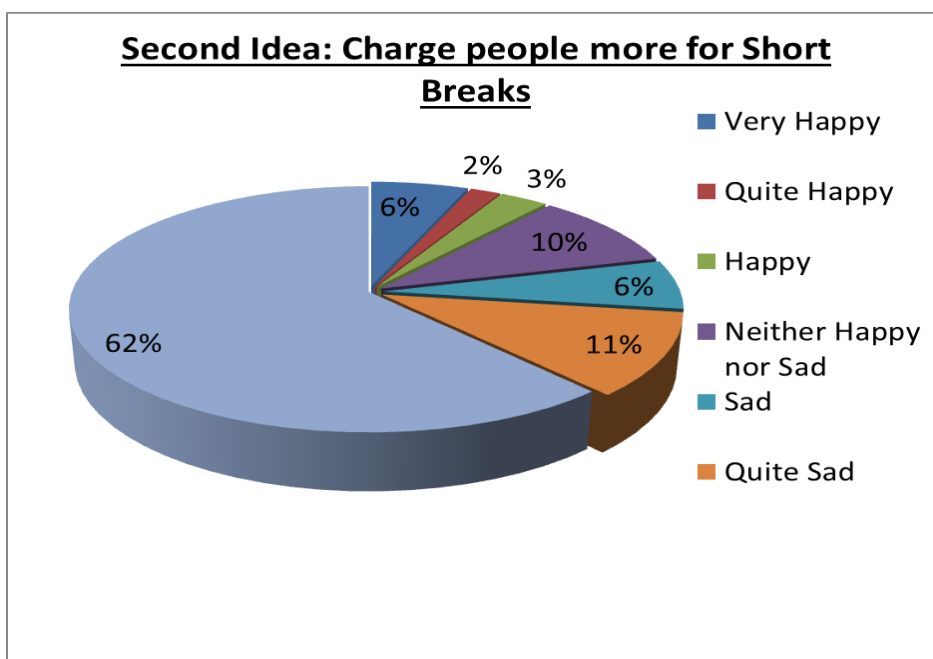
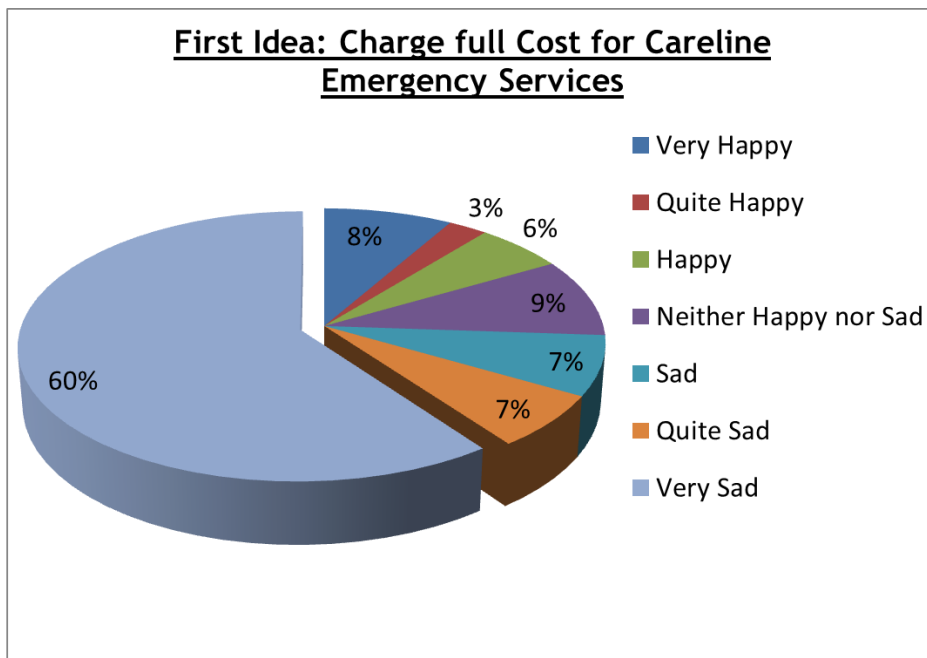
5. Total number of respondents to the survey by Sheltered Housing Complex/
Group/Event

No	Sheltered Housing Complex	Dates	No Surveys completed
1	Airey Neave Court	20/10/2015	2
2	Mahoney Hall	22/10/2015	7
3	Harty Close	26/10/2015	11
4	Piggs Corner	27/10/2015	21
5	Frederick Andrews Court	28/10/2015	21
6	Alexandra Court	3/11/2015	4
7	The Rowans	24/11/2015	7
8	Arthur Barnes	4/11/2015	12
9	Freeman Court	5/11/2015	16
10	St Anne's Court	6/11/2015	0
11	Collier Court	9/11/2015	21
12	Doug Siddons	10/11/2015	6
13	Lansbury Gardens	11/11/2015	14
14	Mulberry Drive	11/11/2015	9
15	Crown Court	12/11/2015	4
16	Kynoch Court	12/11/2015	34
17	The Sycamores	13/11/2015	4
18	Helford Court	16/11/2015	0
19	Elizabeth Gardens	16/11/2015	22
20	Rookery Court	17/11/2015	8
21	Alf Lowen Court	19/11/2015	6
22	Dove Court	24/11/2015	4
22	Delargy Close	30/11/2015	5
23	Vigerons Way	30/11/2015	0
24	Benyon Court	3/12/2015	4
25	O'Donoghue House	3/12/2015	31
26	South Ockenden Centre	3/11/2015	19
27	Tilbury Hub	30/11/2015	2
28	Post		13
29	Over 60s Club, Thurrock Rugby Club	5/11/2015	10
30	Healthwatch Event	1/12/2015	5
TOTAL			322

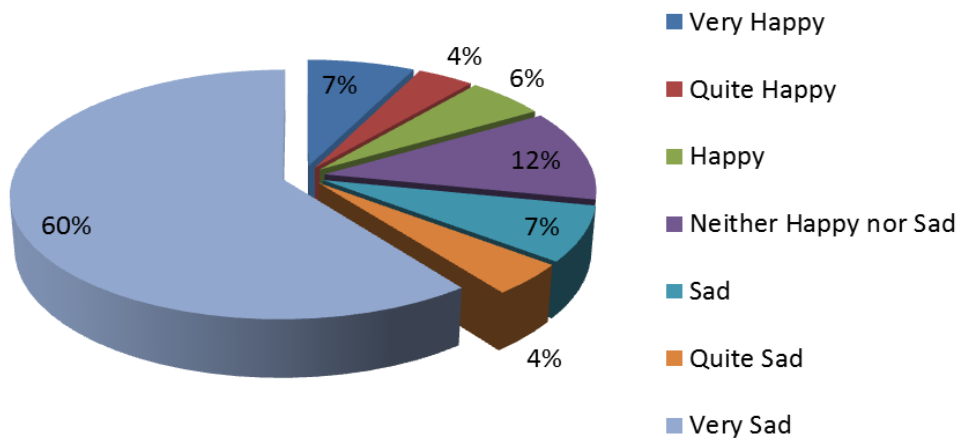


6. Responses to Survey questions on proposed changes

An average of 60 % of respondents were very sad with the proposed ideas of charging the full cost for Careline Emergency Services, charging more for short breaks and the Thurrock Council stop paying for equipment less than £50. The number of people who were happy with the proposed changes were largely fewer in numbers in comparison. The pie charts below show the extremes in the responses to the survey on the 3 proposed ideas.



**Third Idea: Thurrock Council to stop paying
for equipment under £50**



7. Additional Views on making a full charge on Emergency Careline Services

- “If service improves, this would help. Sometimes the response time can be 20 - 25 minutes”
- “Husband and wife £20 worse off each month. Thought our rent should cover this? Rent goes up every year, garage rent up every year, rates up every year. Do not need anything else to pay for.”

- “What happens if someone cannot afford this service?”
- “I could not afford it anyway, that is £10 a month off my money”
- “They should be means tested. Some people have more than 1 pension, if that is so, then people with more than 1 pension should pay. But I think that £2.52 is too much. Why is it that the vulnerable people always suffer for it?”

- “If I have got to pay more I may lose my disability allowance which is quite likely. I have no family locally, my son is in Spain and my daughter in Cambridgeshire.”
- “Rubbish! Paid for in my full rent. Not on benefits. Benefit people would probably not have to pay £2.52 per week which is unfair.”
- “I phoned Careline for my Mum who was on the floor, I needed help and was told “it would be quicker to dial 999 myself”

- “Disgraceful!, why should we pay for any services we have paid all our lives for when we get older after the age of 65 or retirement it should be free, that is why we have paid NHS all our lives totally wrong , NO!”
- “People like me are older and rely on Careline for peace of mind. Can I ask my pension provider to increase £2.52 to pay this my government pension - I don't think so. I'm on a fixed pension income how will I cope with the extra £130pa DEDUCTIONS.”

- “This would make over £10 per month on the rent. We will soon not have enough to go round. What does the Careline do to want this amount? How about charging when you make use of the service? Otherwise maybe we easily opt out. The service is getting less and less , no Wardens all day but the rents still go up!”
- “No! No! No! Enough is enough. We are on limited pension unable to earn more to pay for these charges especially if as I do pay full rent and Council Tax. Best plan scrap the services that would save money”.

- “I will have to give up my Careline which I had put in as I had a heart attack when I was in my bungalow on my own, as I live on my own, and certainly cannot afford the extra charge. I think the whole idea is disgusting and despicable that you should pick on old people on fixed income.”
- “What will happen after 3 year period?”

8. Additional Views on Charging more for Short Breaks

- “Respite is a very important service for some long term carers . Also carers of terminally ill people need a break. How far does a pension go when trying to survive with heating costs etc.? How do they find the extra money for this?”
- “This is not a good idea as it would really affect some people.”

- “Cost of this would be a strain on my finances and I would have to think hard as to if I could let that happen.”
- “Please God I never need respite care.”
- “I disagree completely. This would leave me with nothing to live on.”
- “Cut down on other spending to be able to pay for it.”
- “Never had a break from Council all my life.”

- “I live on a state pension only. Extra payment would cause problems.”
- “Again this is bordering on criminal surely, the carers in our society deserve a break occasionally and this should not be at the expense of the cared for who again are the poorest and the most vulnerable.”
- “This is a terrible idea. People who need carers to look after them are that ill and disabled that they do not need the extra worry of money!!
-

- “If people are able to afford to pay for short breaks. Most people in that situation would have some funds to pay for the service. It would be worth paying so that the Carer had a rest. Would this be means tested? So if someone hadn't enough money coming in, they could still have a break. One way to solve the problem would be to give everyone over 70 a pill and do away with us all - that would save you money.”

- “I have had respite for my husband when I have been unwell & although I expect to pay something I don't know if I could afford it if the price was high.”
- “Not a good thing.
- “Really! So much pressure!”
- “Charge full price but cap so everyone pays a fixed fee. It would mean I don't get any respite, my income wouldn't cover the fees.”

- “If I had to pay it, which I disagree with I could manage it but I don't want to. I am in complete disagreement with the charges. We are elderly and vulnerable now why should we have to pay?”
- “It should be free why should I pay for it. I worked all my life pay all my taxes and still pay over £100 in taxes. Why should I pay?”

9. Additional views on Thurrock Council not paying for equipment under £50

- “Who would carry out this work?!!
Would it be safe? If a rail was to come away from the wall and the person falls and is injured who is responsible?!!
Health and Safety should be the main concern not penny pinching Savings”
- “Most elderly people need this equipment, why should they have to pay for it. This is hitting at the elderly again!”

- “For the sake of grab rail, the cost for a grab rail is cheaper than a months stay in the hospital as people will not be able to afford the equipment and their health would get worse hence falls and stays in the hospital”
- “If you are carer you should not have to pay for it. I have worked all my life and paid my taxes, so I should not have to pay. I am registered blind”

- “It makes me feel sad that all the resources will be affected and its us that will have to pay. Will our benefits be increased to cover the costs?”
- “Would a professional person call to assess the needs of the tenant and give them proper advice as to where the equipment could be purchased and would it be the handyman service that would install the equipment. It would be dangerous to let people fit equipment. Paying for small items shouldn't be a problem. Please arrange to collect equipment that is no longer needed. So much is wasted when equipment is thrown away, instead of being checked & re-used again.”

- “These items are for safety reasons. Someone on a basic pension would not be able to afford getting the items needed to keep safe”.
- “Petty! What if someone can't afford to buy such items and say they have an accident in their home because of this - what then? Also what if you don't have anyone to fix such items to or in your premises - what happens then?”
- “Cannot go out, buy and fix items, that's why I stay in Sheltered. Council to act accordingly to different needs. Pensioners allowance cannot afford items”

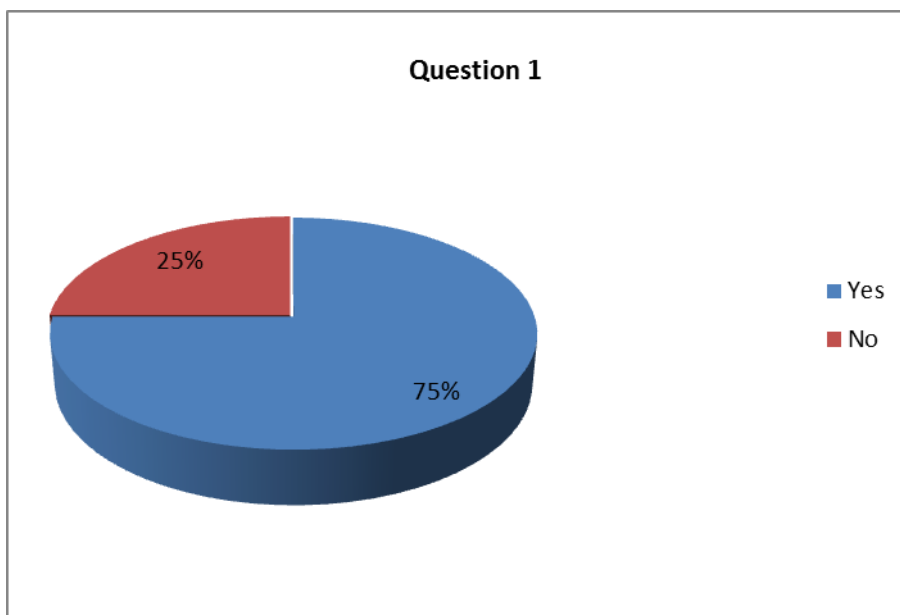
- “There is no local shop available and everybody is not on the web to buy equipment who is going to fit them. This equipment could be returned and fumigated so who is going to fit equipment are private fitters police checked. Are we still going to have a warden, I think the council should think very carefully about these changes.”
- “Put pressure on family to pay”
- “This is not right we have too respect & care for our elderly people. One day you may need help”

- “Again disgusted! This complex (Freeman Court) has been asking for a disability toilet for over 3 years and still waiting. We have offered to pay for a raised toilet seat for people who need this facility but this offer has been refused by the Council. Are they waiting until they can charge an astronomical price per week for the rest of their tenancy?”
- ““Sort out how much it cost me to have a new bathroom when everybody else did not pay for it”

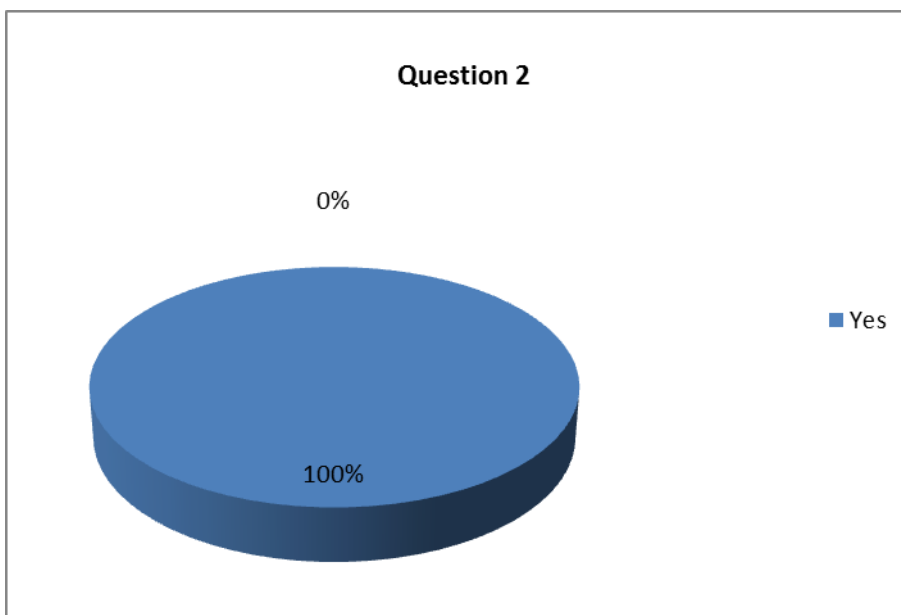
10. Views gathered on extra Care at Elizabeth Gardens

Below are the responses to questions 1,2, 3, 4, 7 and 12 to the full word document survey done at Elizabeth Gardens in pie chart format.

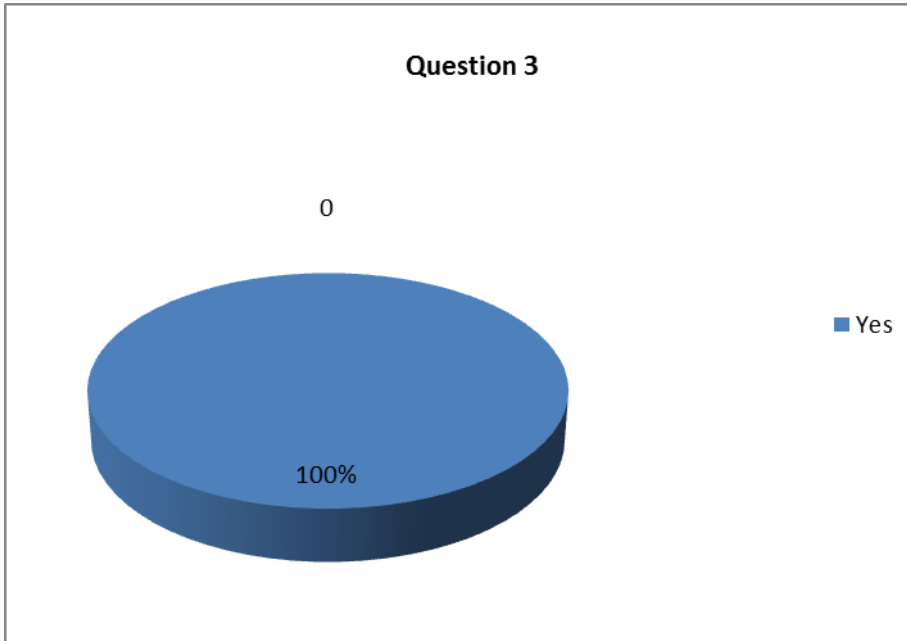
Question 1: Should proposals be extended and only provide service at larger sites (including the Carer's Centre Cromwell Road) with longer hours, possibly 7 days a week?



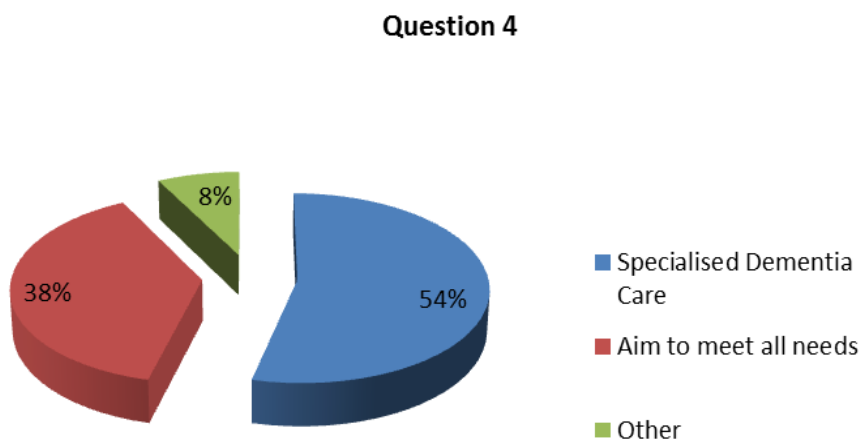
Question 2: Should Day Care offer its services to people on a more flexible basis? This could be hourly sessions, or half days as well as full days



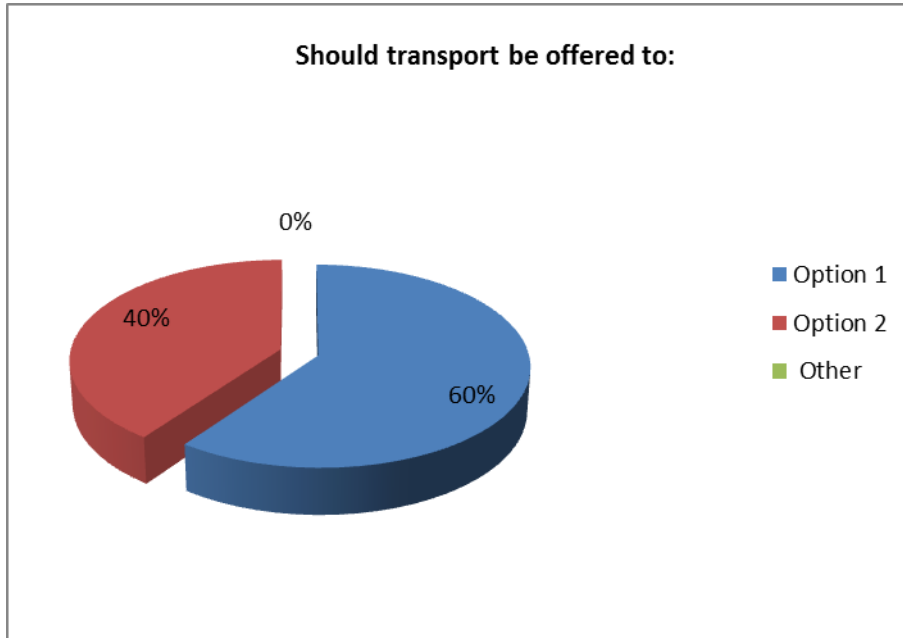
Question 3: Should the service be offered to people who arrange and pay for their own social care, as well as those who are assessed eligible for Council provided care?



Question 4: Is there a need for specialised dementia Day Care services or should all Day Care and the Carers' Services aim to meet all needs



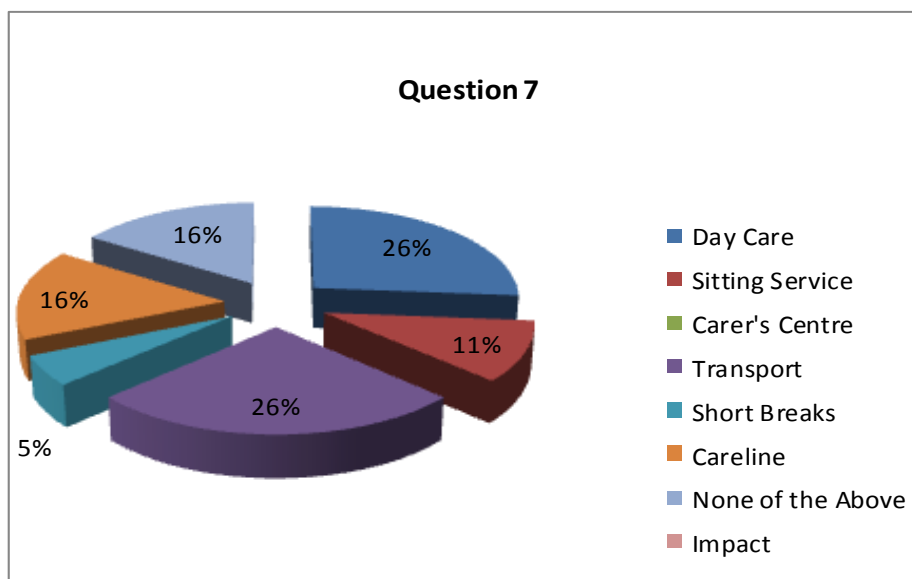
Question 5. Should transport be offered to



Option 1 All people attending day Care

Option 2 Only when people cannot provide their own transport or use public or community transport instead

Question 7: Which of these proposals would affect you?



In response to question 12, would you like to take part in meetings, 3 people answered yes.

Other comments and views made by the residents of Elizabeth Gardens in response to Question 1

- “I think it will help”
- “Stay as it is”.
- “4 Different sites are being used on Monday & Friday one would assume it would be more cost effective using one site. Also clients with dementia would become more familiar with their surroundings causing them less confusion. However, as it has not been stated how many larger sites are available, an assurance would need to be given that the site used would be able to cope with the extra numbers”.

Other comments and views made by the residents of Elizabeth Gardens to Question 2

- “It is my right for some facilities to be before all”.
- “flexible is good.”
- “Half days would be very good.”
- “Dementia for over 7yrs only has day centre twice per week. We are happy to pay for more.”
- “Answer yes as this would offer the services to carers who only need occasional short term respite and more affordable”.

Other comments made on Question 3

- “should be free for all”.
- “Help should be for everyone.”
- “Should be available to all who can pay, but one would assume that those who are capable of arranging & paying for their own social care are more likely to deal with other issues. Therefore would say priority to those who haven’t the ability to manage their own affairs.”

Other comments made on Question 4

- “If some care centres are to close will this mean some will have to travel further, therefore extra travel expenses.”
- “Everybody needs help”.
- “Time to care for those with dementia in often smaller groups which is more beneficial.”
- I think total advantage of Elderly people who cannot afford these changes and putting financial pressure on their families”.

Other comments made in response to Question 5

- “As dad's dementia gets worse he would not have the ability to use public transport or arrange own transport.
- “Only when people cannot provide there own transport or community transport. If day care is required no one should have to use public transport.

11. Suggestions on improving the quality and reducing the cost of Day Care and the Carers' service

- “Many residential/assisted living have day rooms where morning and afternoon activities could take place which would help those with dementia in a safe and familiar surrounding. Elizabeth gardens has an activity room where could be run by carers for activities”.
- “If carers are used then pay something towards service. If carers are not used then shouldn't have to pay.”

- “Although this is a proposal for cost cutting it needs to be recognised that this delays the inevitable. To solve the funding issue long-term money has to be spent to cut future costs. As a rapidly growing population will continue to put pressure on social service budgets unless adequate infrastructure is put in place. Centrally located care centres large enough & equipped to provide to provide stimulation & appropriate care for those suffering from memory loss. A sense of wellbeing and worth for all who are unfortunate enough to require care. This in turn will help take pressure off carers who work tirelessly 24/7. Carers are an ageing population as well as those who are cared for.”

12. Views of the residents of Elizabeth Gardens on Extra Care

- “If £40 per week is to be charged regardless if care is used then more residents will want some service. The care team are over stretched now so more staff will be needed .”
- “All residents should have the option to take on private care.”

- “1.You state no current tenant will be worse off, please explain how you intend to do this when you are asking me to pay £40 per week more £2,080py.
- 2.”You want me to pay to make your balance sheet look good. Why should I pay for a service I do not use.”

- “Careline included in service charge. Copy attached.”
- “Don’t think we should pay £40 if you don’t need it. If and when you need it that’s fair to pay.”
- “Not all residents will be able to afford this, especially if they do not require care those receiving care and being charged will make it very difficult.”

- “Tax the rich more. I don’t think it right don’t know how I will pay.”
- “We do not get any physical care at all other than normal person contact. When & if we receive any physical care then we would pay for it. It is an operation to extort money.”

13. Suggestions made by respondents on how to improve services

- “Every Centre has a vacant ex-warden accommodation in 26 centres for 12 years the Council had not used the revenue which must be enormous.”
- “Not affordable, basic pensioners won't be able to pay. Recycle equipment no longer in use or put equipment out on loan that it can be used again. There is loads of equipment just lying around not being used, go around and collect them, this will save Council thousands.”

- “If the council collected all the equipment when it was finished with they would not need to do this.”
- “Equipment that is no longer needed should be inspected and pass on to someone who does need it and not thrown away.”
- “I've know people who have passed away and their family have tired returning, wheelchairs, frames, grab rails etc. but have been told to bin them cos it costs more to pick up. Really why can't these things be given to those people who can't afford these things.”

Conclusion

From the responses gathered during the consultation Events, it is obvious that the voices of those who will be affected are indicating concerns.

Healthwatch Thurrock are concerned that although we recognise that savings have to be made – these proposals could have a significant effect on some of the most vulnerable in our communities.

Below are some ideas gathered from service users, Carers and Staff with regard to the proposals:

Daycare services need to be delivered differently – Enabling best use of the communal lounges within all Sheltered accommodation to cut down transport service costs and enable people to remain in their own complexes.

Concerns around the implementation of charges for equipment under £50

1. the assessment of what equipment is needed
2. where it can be purchased and how if a person has mobility issues and no access to a computer.
3. Safe fitting of equipment.

If the equipment is purchased and fitted by the service user or family member and it fails (handrails) there could be a serious injury resulting in a hospital stay which could be not only detrimental to the person but also incur a larger cost for Health Care.

Charging for Careline would impact on people with financial hardship – also many indicated that they would return them rather than pay. This would be a concern that people who have an assessed need would return the item leaving them in a vulnerable position.

Charging for extra care – those in private flats (Elizabeth Gardens) feel that they bought those flats without the £40 weekly charge and it was never mentioned in their contracts – to have to pay for a service they do not use is wrong. Legal advice is being sought as to the legality of the charge.

Recommendations

1. It is recommended that any Council tenant needing extra care has the complete, clear understanding of charges.
2. Private tenants (homeowners) incur the charge when they use the service.
3. All new tenants have the charge clearly stated in their contracts etc. before they choose to move in/buy property in Elizabeth Gardens.
It cannot be charged retrospectively without there being a major dispute which would be unacceptable.

Report ends