

# You said ... We did ...



Healthwatch Derbyshire (HWD) is an independent voice for the people of Derbyshire. We are here to listen to the experiences of Derbyshire residents and give them a stronger say in influencing how local health and social care services are provided.

Between January - March 2019 we spoke to 428 carers to find out about how their role as a carer can impact upon their quality of life. This flyer highlights a number of the main themes from the report and what happened as a result of people sharing their views with us.

To read a full copy of the report please visit:

<https://healthwatchderbyshire.co.uk/2019/08/carers-report/>



## Impact on health

Carers told us how their health had become affected, due to not having the time to book/attend GP appointments, and for some their mental health had been impacted upon due to the pressures of their caring role and also feeling alone and isolated.

*“Even when I was ill I still had to be a carer 24/7, I had to put myself second.”*

“ In May Derbyshire Carers Association (DCA) introduced a telephone befriending service. This allows isolated carers the chance to talk to a volunteer once a week, providing a much needed opportunity for social contact. ”

## Time for self and social contact

Carers explained that being a carer is a 24/7 role and many felt they had very little, or no time to themselves and were often unable to maintain social contact due to time, finances and unpredictability of the cared for.

“ Derbyshire County Council (DCC) will continue to work with carers, council staff and DCA to ensure that carers have the right information and opportunities to access a break from caring, they will also explore ways to provide breaks for carers through technology, innovation and increasing the recognition of carers in local communities and wider society. ”

## Peer support

Peer support was described as ‘invaluable’ as it enables carers to have open and honest conversations about their feelings, share experiences and gain advice.

*“As a carer you can feel very alone, attending the carers support group is a lifeline where I am not alone in my struggles, I can be in a place where people can understand what I am going through and everyone shares tips to help me out.”*

“ DCA believe peer support groups are a fantastic way for carers to support one another and socialise. DCA are currently developing new support groups in areas where previously none existed. ”

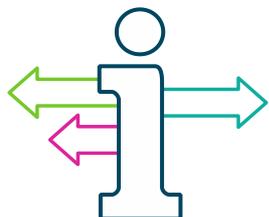


## Information and support

Many carers explained difficulties of finding the right information at the right time and felt a 'one-stop shop' would be a huge benefit.

*"The pressure of caring and supposedly knowing everything is often too much to bear."*

“ Derbyshire County Council has commissioned a single point of access to provide information, advice and guidance as part of the carers contract with DCA, so it is unfortunate that some carers are either not aware of this service, or do not perceive this to be a 'one stop shop'. DCC will work with DCA to consider how they can raise the profile of the service. ”



## Carers assessments

Many carers explained they would prefer to have their assessment face-to-face, rather than over the phone and it to be with a professional who has a good understanding of the condition i.e. mental health.

“ DCC are aware that telephone assessments are unpopular with many carers and are working on ways to maximise capacity within the service whilst meeting the preferred methods of intervention. ”

*In terms of assessments, DCA's triage team thoroughly understand the competencies of team members and can allocate assessments to the most appropriate worker for each unique situation. ”*

## Have your say

Share your ideas and experiences and help services hear what works, what doesn't and what you want from care in the future.



## Involvement of carers:

A high proportion of carers felt their views and opinions were not considered or valued by professionals. This was particularly the case for carers of people with a long-term condition or mental health.

*"Professionals need to really listen to carers as they spend most of their time with the cared for person so they will have a lot to contribute about how the person has been, or if the treatment or medication is working."*

“ This is a key factor in all DCA do, and is a priority within the carers assessment and support plan. It's essential that carers have a voice and the value of that is critical in co-producing any documentations. The carers are the experts in their own caring role. DCA can signpost carers to formal advocacy services, so that their voices can be heard when important decisions are being made. ”



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