



Carers Champions Carer Feedback Survey Sept 07 – Feb 09



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INTRODUCTION

Carers Champions is a service that does its best to be carer led and we value the experiences of carers and feedback about the help you have received from us. This report looks at the Carers Champions service at the end of Feb 09 and collates the views of carers together with their ideas and suggestions for the future of the service.

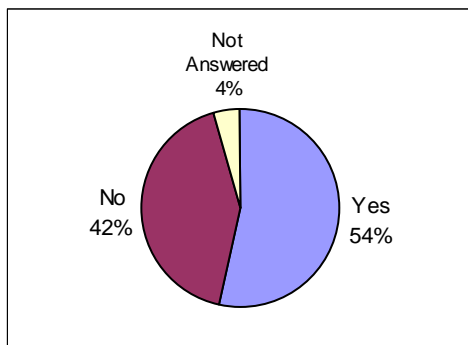
It is a requirement of our specification to do an annual survey.

A total of 73 completed questionnaires were returned to us, which equates to a return rate of 6%, which is a low response rate. However it is also worth bearing in mind that in terms of the range of services we provide feedback is also given via a variety of other sources, e.g. feedback at social and carers events, via the newsletter, monitoring group, suggestions and training evaluation. We work on a process of continuous feedback because experience has shown us not to rely on an annual survey as a single tool to seek feedback – this is the case for all our services and annual surveys often prove an expensive feedback tool in terms of cost versus benefit.

SURVEY RESPONSES

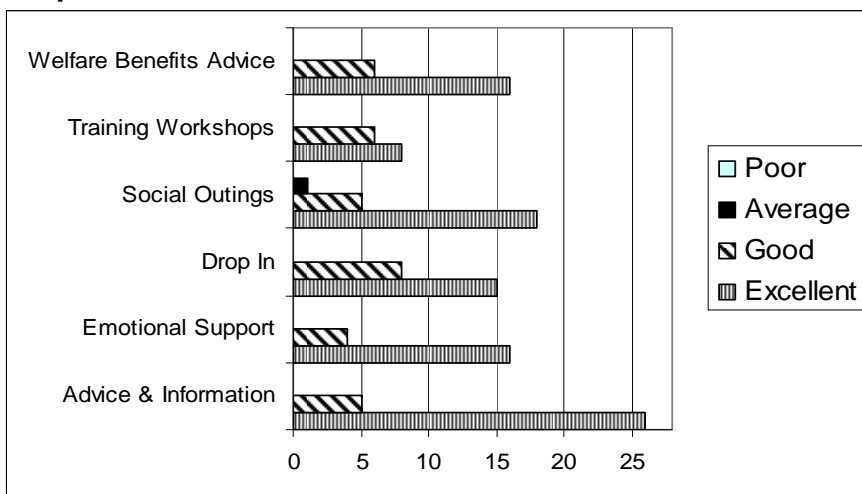
Carers were asked if they had been in contact or used any services from Carers Champions?

Response:



Of the people who had been in contact with Carers Champions or were aware of the services, they rated the services as follows:

Response:



Services were generally rated as good/excellent.

Carers were asked for their comments regarding service improvement / ideas for development given the constraints of service specification:

Response:

Communication

- Know more in advance what's going on and what support I can get for me as a carer
- Not all carers can make calls or get to events or use the internet, but many use mobile phones, a buddy text system may be good to make friends or get information, support and advice. Texting is cheap and quite accessible.

Compliments

- Congratulations to all. And many thanks
- You are very supportive I cannot think of a way to improve any of the above

Drop In / Outreach

- The 'Drop In' room seemed a bit small – is there a larger area perhaps where there could be a speaker and accommodate more people as at Ernest English – or did I miss seeing this area? – Only been once.

Service Improvement

- The services you provide appear only to be held during the daytime. Full timers may feel excluded.
- Need more workshops to start at 11am/12 noon. 10am is too early to get there, have to wait for transport for my son.
- Putting carers in touch with carers

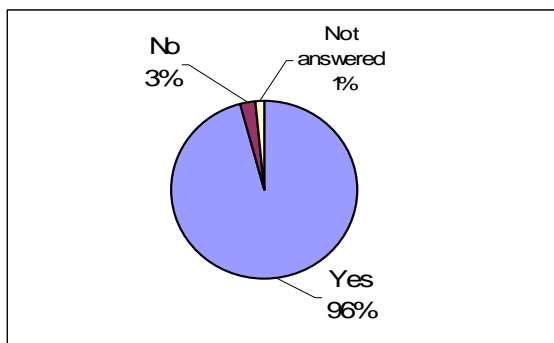
Welfare Benefits

- Welfare benefits – representation as well as advice
- Welfare Benefits Advice – my ex-partner had a brain haemorrhage in Sept 2007 he has only had £124.00 per week to live on since. I found out a couple of weeks ago he is entitled to Housing Benefit/DLA it would have been good if someone had told us this. Maybe your newsletter could have information printed about this.

Other

- Too early to comment, maybe when I've been associated with the Carers Champions.
- Unable to comment as I have not yet used the services in their current format

Carers were asked if they received the Carers Champions Newsletter?



96% of the carers who responded to the survey are receiving the newsletter

Carers were asked if the newsletter is helpful to them and what they thought of it on the whole?

Response:

Communication

- 5 people said that although good the newsletter didn't arrive far enough in advance of events being held. People need more warning in order to be able to book/attend.
- Yes, I think it is very beneficial to people to know what us on offer – I enjoy the Drop In natter and the things I learn helps me to cope – thank you all

Compliments

- Full of relevant info – I like the new format and the photos of the staff!
- Yes, very good/helpful/informative x 39
- Yes – it is very interesting and I might well have to use facilities in the future
- It's very hard to find anything at all to criticise so you should take that as a compliment! It was interesting seeing photos and details of new team members
- Yes there's an awful lot in it. When it first arrived I was overwhelmed – so much to read and no time! Gradually getting round the subjects! I thought I was being offered a job when it came! Job adverts on front page.
- Yes, it's excellent. I am sorry I live out in the South Hams and due to being severely disabled as well as my cared for 92yr old, I cannot travel into Plymouth to meet you all.
- Full of useful information for me personally it is like having a friend dropping through my letterbox.

Newsletter Topics

- I have used information on benefits
- Provides lots of information and dates for trips
- It is so full of useful information – contact details, info on events and advice on dealing with everything from day to day budget – debt – benefits or most importantly the emotional well being issues around being a carer.
- Yes, there are useful articles of interest and information included without making it too fussy and bulky.

Other

- Not really
- Yes but it is not easy for me to come to any of the events because I only have one day a week of 5 hours to do any shopping that is needed.
- I enjoy reading it and although I don't need your services at the moment it is comforting to know I can call on you if I need help.
- I'd like it to keep coming. The information is useful although I have not yet found it necessary to use the services provided.

Carers were asked how the newsletter could be improved –

Response:

Communication

- More prior notice – 'I wonder do you only get the same few carers (in the know) at events'?
- I would like to have had contact earlier in his illness, I think notification of events is not sent out in time
- With more input from carers
- By getting the start time of events synchronised e.g. diff pages have same events but different start times
- 4 people thought the newsletter needed to be sent out sooner so that people had advance notice of events

Compliments

- I think it is good as it is
- It is really hard to improve something that's already so good. Keep asking carers themselves as they will help you develop the service. You already encourage them to do this.
- I think a good job is already being done
- Current balance would appear to be about right
- Carry on the good work
- Keep doing more of the same
- Its improving all the time

Cost

- Just a question – is the glossy paper a little expensive?! And the colour rather than greyscale

Specific Topics

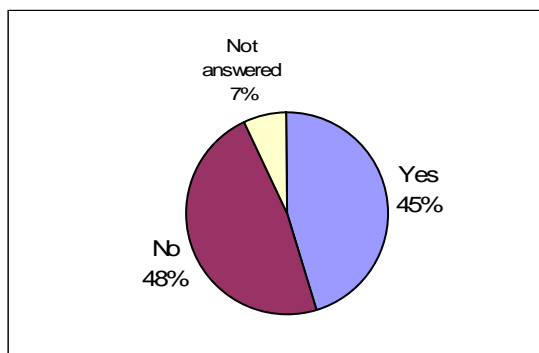
- More information on where and how to access services, for transport leisure activities for elderly wheelchair users
- An events list like you have done on page 2. A list up to March is much better, thanks
- I would like to see a page dedicated to carers in there. Stories how they cope with caring, any tips and information they can pass on to other carers. In the last two years I myself was diagnosed with R/A, my ex partner had brain haemorrhage and I care for him and now my mum has vascular dementia who I care for.
- Maybe a puzzle page

Other

- Probably smaller – the size was very off putting. I just didn't look at it! Put it away somewhere!
- Bit early to comment what I have seen and experienced its ok

Carers were asked if they had been in contact with any of the Carers Champions team staff e.g. via telephone, Drop Ins, visits etc?

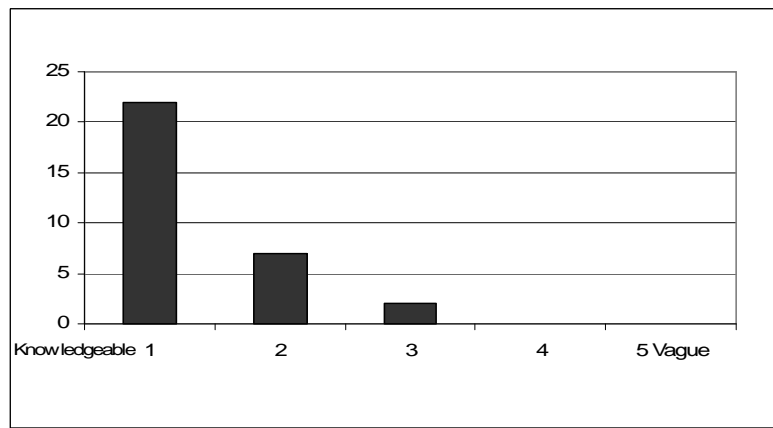
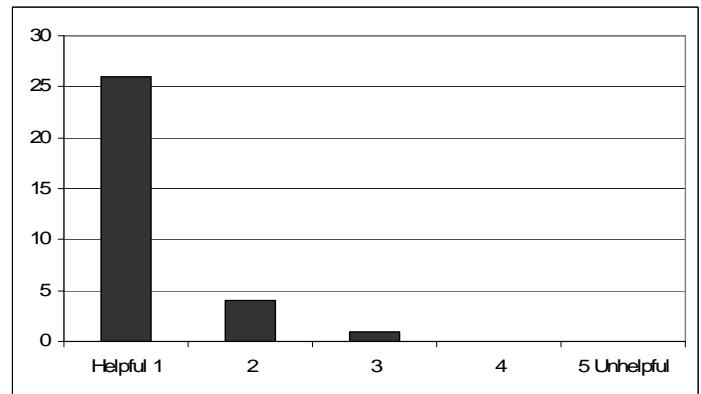
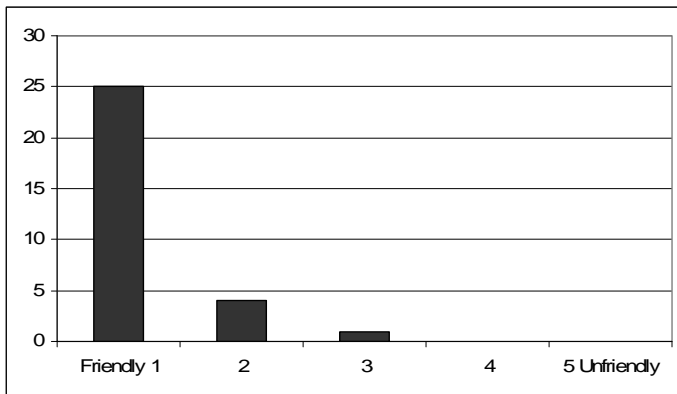
Response:



Out of those surveyed, 48% of carers have not yet had any contact with Carers Champions staff

Of the people who had been in contact with Carers Champions staff, they rated the staff as follows:

Response:



Carers were asked for any further comments:

Response:

Funding

- Sincerely hope council does not withdraw your funding as often happens – particularly in view of lost Iceland money!

Communication

- Only contact is newsletter!

Compliments

- If staff don't know, they go out of their way to find things out
- Treated like an individual rather than as a ciper!
- It is such a help to know that a service for those who often feel very isolated has at last been launched and proved to be such a great success. I hope it continues to be so for a very long time.
- It is good to know you are there if needed
- I think it's a very open minded accepting group. You've probably got to be quite outgoing to be able to cope with info or come out to the do's.

Service Improvement

- I think a one-off personal contact with new carers who come into your database would be useful and make the service more accessible to people who would find it difficult to make a first approach. I would have liked emotional support but never felt able to call.
- Everyone is on the ball but more help is needed

Drop Ins / Outreach

- When I depart from the Drop Ins my problems just fade away – it is wonderful to know there are people who advise and help you through a problem (or share a problem). I know, since

contacting Carers Champions my health has improved – thanks

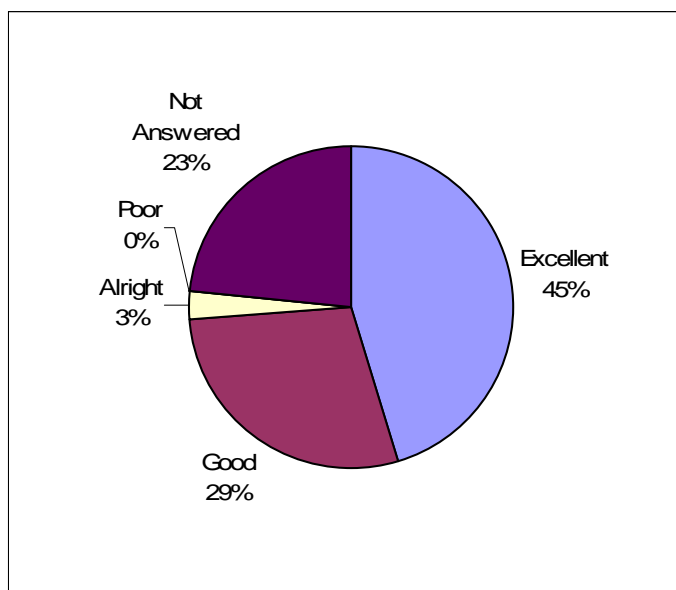
- I would like to say how at ease you made me feel and how approachable you were. I am sorry if I talked too much! But it was nice to talk to someone who understands

Other

- Likely to use more
- Hopefully I will make use of your services in the near future. Well done
- I haven't used the service enough to make comments but would like to continue to receive information

Carers were asked for their opinion of the overall service that Carers Champions provides?

Response:



Carers were asked what they would improve:

Response:

Premises / Venues

- Would have liked a more central position – i.e. nearer to Royal Parade and access by public transport
- Better premises
- I cannot think of any improvements – maybe move out the Drop Ins i.e. Plymouth, Plympton, Plymstock etc
- I sometimes can't get to the place by bus, love to have a course near to where I live, would be easier.

Increase Direct Support

- 24 hours phone line
- My mum gets very lonely she only has me to talk to it would be good to have a service where she could ring or drop in for a chat
- It would be nice if there was a 24hr place open where we could go to talk to someone, you can't talk on the phone when the one you care for is there.

Funding / Continuity of Service

- Make sure funding is ring fenced so it can't be withdrawn just as you are doing well as so often happens.
- To know that your service would (as many in this city have been) prove to be a great

success, value for money etc but was not funded to continue. Please fight to sustain this service for the future.

Other

- Unable to say – seems like a million miles away
- Of all those I have made contact with I found them all to be smart, patient and professional in their ability to carry out their duties. I have no reason to criticise them in any way nor can I suggest anything in my case to improve matters.
- Sometimes the information arrives too late to take advantage of workshops etc
- I can't see any improvement because I think you provide excellent service for carers.
- I have not taken advantage of the service but may do so in the future

Question in Survey

As an organisation and service that will campaign for carers, we will always pass on unmet needs information to the Council so they can be informed for future planning. Also we will do our best to try to fundraise for other things that carers may need. Carers were asked to tell us about any current gaps in carers services / unmet needs:

Response:

Carers Assessments

- I understand you need a carers assessment to get grants etc why does this not apply to people like myself who care for young children with special needs (I have a son aged 6)
- I would like to know my position with social workers, at the moment my mum is in Plympton hospital being assessed and I have had no contact with her social worker for 4 weeks. What is her duty of care towards my mum and me as my mums carer?

Communication

- We need more newsletters, more contact

Events / Drop In

- Not always possible for carer to leave husband/wife for length of time needed to attend. How do others manage?
- Would appreciate formal health check by professional as part of Carers Events
- Please let me know when you are fundraising I would be happy to come along and give my support.
- Help with setting up groups
- Trips to Totnes Cathedral for the disabled service
- Last year there were some plays/concerts with carers taking part – are we involved? It would be a good idea...

Funding / Continuity of Service

- The knowledge that this service would have a secure future would be and should be a priority for Plymouth City Council as the service is such good value for money for carers and those they care for. Congratulations on identifying and responding to carers of drug and alcohol users – fantastic news.

Increase Direct Support

- Is there any counselling service available to carers to help unburden them of their fears and concerns?

New Carers

- Many carers have never heard of 'Carers Champions', silent carers without any support! Unable to leave cared for, unable to get to office, no transport.

Service Improvement

- Better and safe ways to use a transport system as my son is to lose his day place in January and taxi, but cannot travel on his own.
- At present the family are able to cope but I am frankly horrified at the hourly rate that has to

be paid to carers (i.e. agency workers). Also the difficulty in getting one at all! This situation must improve otherwise it will be the family carers who will suffer as many do now.

- Sickness/respice relief
- Evening meetings for carers who work during the day
- There is no support for people with Hep C or their carers since the Lighthouse collapsed. I would like to know of Carers Champions can do anything to help? I am a carer and I am friends with a carer whose husband has Hep C and is quite unwell.
- Respite care is extremely difficult to find and at a time you want it if you could receive no financial support from social services. I am pleased to see details of the new voucher scheme, but again this is no use to people of 'independent means'
- Poor facilities at hospitals to carry out routine tasks on wheelchair bound patients, which whilst not directly a carer issue it causes unnecessary stress for the carer and wastes valuable time!

Other

- Keep up the good work. Carers need all the help they can get.
- Haven't been associated with Carers Champions long so cannot give any opinions yet – later maybe – who knows!

Carers were asked if they wanted to receive any further information or assistance from Carers Champions? *These requests will be followed up by the Carers Champions Team.*

Response:

Compliments

- Just keep doing what you do. I am happy to support in any way I can. Good luck for 2009. Thank you for all you do for us.
- I look forward to your magazine
- It is very reassuring to know that if a problem should arise Carers Champions can be contacted for help and advice. Thank you.

Direct Support

- Someone to support me at meetings held at Plympton hospital every Tuesday 2pm concerning my mums care and future.

Events / Drop In Information

- Can you tell me of a bus/coach company that organise day trips for wheelchair users or a company who hire out buses/coaches with wheelchair access so we may organise our own trips.
- What Drop in centres there are or group support in my area much needed. In January 62 people will lose DPP & Hands on Pottery.
- I am on the threshold of needing help and intend to visit on one of your drop ins.

Other

- Not at present. Your phone number is top of my list when the need arises again the info on p4 re emergency help is very good news!
- Have you had other people who find it so difficult to get a Watersure billing account from South West Water?
- I find it difficult to have much free time other than 5 hours a week and 7 hours once a month
- Oh yes please, especially if it helps us. You can help us by 'being there'
- Yes information about the relief fund
- Not at present thanks. Mother has Sunshine Care twice a day – I do the rest – pretty constricting. Don't think you can help.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As we have stated at the beginning of this report we do not solely rely on the annual survey as the primary source of feedback so in the context of assessing the overall service it is important to factor in feedback from the other sources of feedback previously mentioned.

I have broken the recommendations down into the key theme areas that appear to be recurring throughout the feedback report and then the second half of the recommendations section is in relation to the actual specification.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS / FUNDING ISSUES

As mentioned at points throughout this report and in the day to day contact we have it is clear that carers do have anxieties about any potential service changes in the future / funding limitations.

Also for us as an organisation we have match funded and invested significant amounts of management time and energy into this service to enable it to be high quality and responsive. There clearly needs to be some discussions with funders about long term plans for this service bearing in mind organisational investment, carers anxieties and current satisfaction with the service.

ACTION – (Desanne & Commissioners)

- Commissioners will need to give Carers Champions a clear steer on whether the existing contract will be renewed, extended or re-procured.

COMMUNICATION ISSUES / NEWSLETTER –

It is clear that the timings and turn around times re printing and newsletter content have not always worked as efficiently as they should and that given that the newsletter is now produced in partnership with Plymouth City Council and outsourced then a clear and realistic timetable for the production of 3-4 newsletters needs to be produced. The criticisms feedback from carers in relation to information / events in the newsletter and timings are justified and clearly need improvement.

SUGGESTED TOPICS FOR NEWSLETTER FROM CARERS –

- Carers page request – carers will now have an allocated page in the newsletter – we are also developing a website page for carers to tell stories on / own news.
- Feature on how to access transport and leisure activities and hire companies which are accessible.
- Suggested a puzzle page
- Keep promoting relief fund
- Support available to set up groups
- Promotion of emotional/floating support service

ACTION –

- Set clear schedule with administrative team re newsletters and production
- Work with Plymouth City Council to improve turnaround times re production of newsletter

- Draw on the expertise of new post holder Sam Sposito in Plymouth City Council to help with compiling a template for the newsletter to improve efficiency. (Action: Carers Team & Sam)
- Ensure the newsletter can also be posted on Plymouth City Council website (Action: Carers Team & Sam)
- More input from carers – see above
 - Carers are encouraged each newsletter to send in articles – this needs a more proactive approach re targeting carers to do pieces for newsletters
- One carer commented on cost but this was a decision by Plymouth City Council to help fund as they felt that a 'professional' and glossy look for the newsletter would be helpful so this has not negatively impacted the Carers Champions budget.

DROP IN –

There is mixed feedback in relation to the current 'Cosy Corner' Drop In. Some carers have commented on the venue and the space. Other venues were trialled in year 1 and were poorly attended.

ACTION –

- The monitoring group, in partnership with Plymouth City Council and Carers Champions Team, need to review the specification in relation to Drop In provision and clearly decide what will be effective. It is also important to bear in mind resource/financial implications in relation to this.

WELFARE BENEFITS & MONEY ADVICE

Good feedback from carers who have utilised this service.

In reality the demand will outweigh the capability within the Carers Champions team to see all carers who need this support. It is vital therefore that people are also signposted to other services across the city e.g. A4E, Plymouth Money Advice, Citizens Advice Bureau etc.

ACTION -

- Plymouth City Council is currently reviewing its Carers Strategy and need to bear in mind carers needs in relation to benefits realisation/financial poverty/support needs.

DIRECT CONTACT WITH CARERS

It is clear that carers really appreciate the service they receive and it is really positive to see so many compliments about the service and staff. What is clear from the ongoing processes that we have in place is that each carer has varied and different needs and one size doesn't fit all.

Whatever type of services we provide within our funding restraints will never be enough.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO BE TAKEN FORWARD

- Contact and floating support offered to new carers to encourage access to services and take up of services available.
- Floating support promoted in newsletter to 'silent carers' who cannot get out so often.

RECOMMENDATIONS PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL NEED TO CONSIDER IN LINE WITH SERVICE DEVELOPMENT CARERS STRATEGY

- Length and continuity of contract/support to carers
- 24hr phone line – development and promotion of the Out of Hours service / buddying text system
- Development/resourcing of evening support for carers who are still in full time / part time jobs
- Carers assessments – really there weren't many comments in relation to this but any strategy needs to have a range of services that carers across the spectrum can access e.g. low needs – high needs with preventative focus.
- Some comments in the report from carers re health needs of carers and regular health MOTs
- Carers also like/need access to some social opportunities events/current resource and time issues within Carers Champions cannot facilitate this.
- Better promotion of counselling services
- Ongoing comments re access to respite, short breaks, evening activities and lack of services
- Support for carers with Hep C
- Concerns from carers re change in day provision for people with learning disabilities and need to communicate with carers and involve them
- Better promotion of out of hours service

Number of compliments on service to date =130

Number of complaints on service to date = 6

Number of Welfare Benefits & Money Advice contacts to date = 121

SPECIFICATION RECOMMENDATIONS

NEW CARERS

Based on assessment against monitoring plans and targets and team review, recommend that finding new and hidden carers is the main priority for the team. In order to continue and facilitate higher achievements in relation to this recommend the following:

- Plan in place for community outreach on monthly basis in public facilities.
- Planned focus at community events and cross working with LINK / PAPOP / PIPs and other services to promote leaflets/the service/find hidden carers
- Heighten the amount of publicity and promotion of the service via Plymouth City Council website, Colebrook website, press, radio etc – within resource constraints
- Improve partnership with Plymouth Age Concern particularly in relation to older carers

ADMINISTRATION SUPPORT

That the current specification is revised to encompass administrative support to new and existing groups rather than two separate targets and that we continue as we are doing to promote and offer this support and we continue to promote in newsletter/website.

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

The team are doing well with this target and uptake is good, we are reviewing the floating support/outreach to carers so we can target this to those most in need. Staff will also continue to be proactive in signposting to counselling and use of out of hours.

CARERS INVOLVEMENT IN SERVICE

The team are proactive about trying to maximise this – the introduction of a carers page for the newsletter and new carers page on the website will also encourage further involvement. Recently we have also started some new partnership work with Families Count Too which is aiding involvement.

TRAINING AWARENESS PROFESSIONALS (12)

We currently schedule these in monthly, I have recommended to the team that we now schedule in 8 per year and leave the other 4 for flexible requests so that we can be more responsive re professionals needs e.g. go and talk to whole teams.

* This is an area where requests exceed our ability to deliver and we are having to decline opportunities, as otherwise it has a negative impact elsewhere on the service. *

TRAINING FOR CARERS

This is working fine and we should continue with our current practice of promoting opportunities for courses as much as possible.

NEW SERVICES

Have achieved targets for Years 1 + 2.

As an organisation we would like to develop our remit much wider and try to bring in additional funding to the city – we need to have clear discussions around the future e.g. the contract, in order to assess the level of investment Colebrook can give now and in the future.

Thank you to all carers who have given us feedback and contributed to this report.

Thank you to all the staff in the Carers Champions Team who are doing a really good job with limited resources.