



Drop-in Review Report September 2009

Carers Champions was set up on 1st September 2007 following the award of the contract from Plymouth City Council. Previous drop-in arrangements relating to the old contract could not continue.

The drop-in was set up in 2007 when the new service started. Its aim was to:-

- Be a meeting place for carers
- Provide time out for carers
- A place for carers to get information and advice
- A place to socialise
- Some time for carers to have to themselves away from their caring role

In addition to these changes the new service has also developed as an outreach model ensuring access for carers via events in the community, outreach sessions e.g. at Derriford, and 1-1 short term floating support.

The Drop-in was initially reviewed in Feb/March of 2009 due to staffing demands elsewhere in the service and the following changes were made:-

- Staff involvement was reviewed and decided that staff were not needed to be in the drop-in lounge for the whole duration of drop-in sessions.
- 1 staff member would be available for 1 to 1 support, and if any issues came up a second staff member would be on standby if needed.
- Other staff would then remain in their offices in order to maintain other aspects of Carers Champions service.
- A Resource Room would be made available for carers to make use of the books, cd's and the carers computer.



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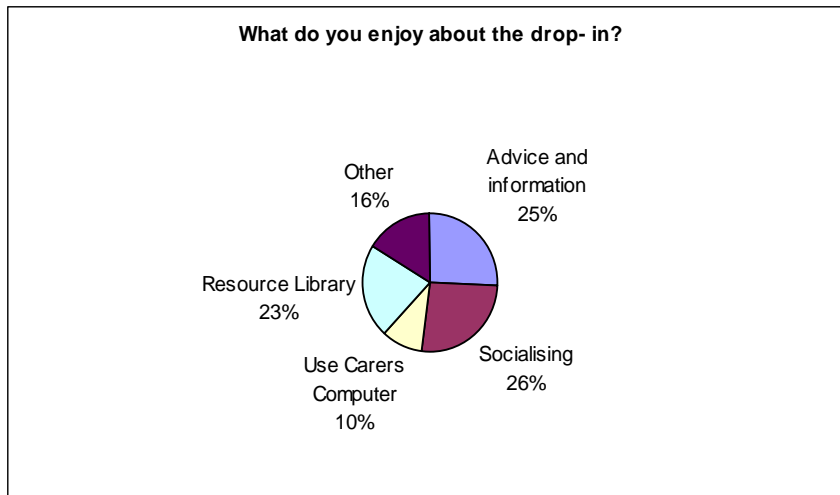
As the attendance of the drop-in has varied the drop-in was again reviewed to check that it was still relevant and useful to those using it.

Since carers are often asked for feedback and had become tired of doing this, we carried out the review using 1 to 1 interviews with either a member of staff or a volunteer going through a questionnaire with drop-in users.

The results of the drop-in review show that:-

1. Socialising and Advice & Information is most valued, followed by use of the resource library and least valued was the carers computer.

The carers' computer was intended as a resource for carers to use e.g. to find out more about health conditions or to become more aware of their rights as carers. It is clear that carers are not using this resource. We will continue to promote it's usage through the drop In, newsletter etc but will also be addressing any barriers there may be such as lack of knowledge about computers, the internet etc.

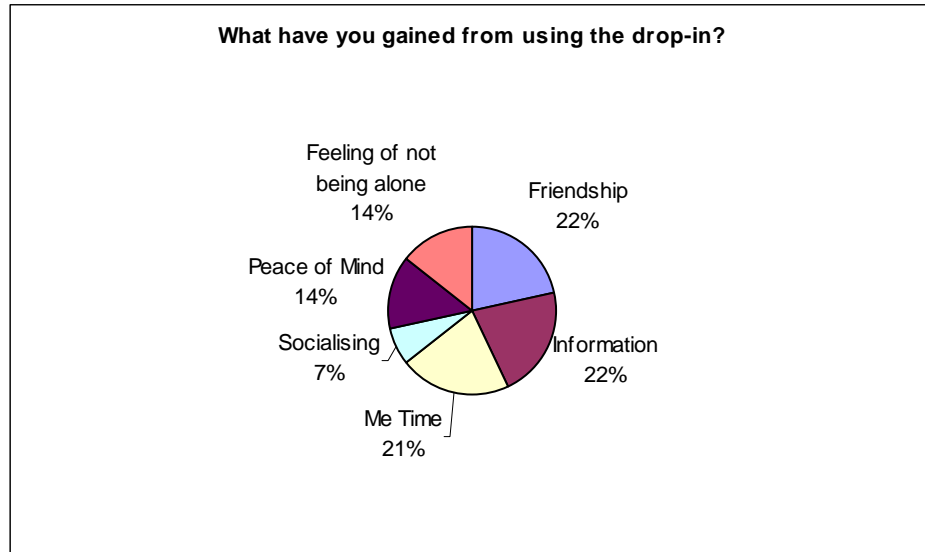


2. For 100% visiting, the drop-in is a positive experience
Examples are:- Gives me confidence/socialising
Somewhere to relax where there are no demands
A relaxing opportunity to chat



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3. What have you gained from using the drop-in?
Carers said they gained the following:-



Information & Friendship was seen to be the most gained from the drop-in with socialising being the least gained.

4. Improvements

Few carers had any suggestions for improvements and were happy with what is currently provided. However 2 carers raised the issue of cared for people attending the drop-in and were unhappy that they had not been able to do so.

Any other comments?

- Great Fun
- A Day out
- Banter
- Put the world to rights
- A few hours respite
- Spread awareness of Carers Champions around the city
- Communication between carers organizations re: social events
- Nice place, good to have some space to think
- Nice to be able to talk



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- People are friendly
- Don't like it when carers talk about personal problems, prefer upbeat conversations

The challenge is one size doesn't fit all persons. The people using the drop-in change so what people decide is good for them now may not suit new members, younger carers or groups of carers with different needs. Taken all of these factors into account the following recommendations are suggested:-

Recommendations

- There needs to be further discussion about the issue of cared for people attending the drop-in, as some carers want this while others value their time out. This will be raised at the drop-in on Wednesday 21st October.
- Carers come to the drop-in for different reasons and have different preferences e.g. some want to offload while others prefer time out from their caring role. Ground rules about use of the drop-in need to be put in place and this will be addressed. Carers will be able to put forward two representatives to work with staff on these ground rules.
- Carers wishing to off load will be offered 1 to 1 support from Carers Champions staff and other options e.g. Counselling, stress management workshops etc will be put forward if appropriate.
N.B Living with Caring workshops will be running on:

24th November 2009 & 19th January 2010

- As the service continues to develop we monitor drop-in and outreach options and may need to be more creative as more people or varying carers access the service e.g. from different ethnic backgrounds and communities, younger carers etc.



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Given that people want different things we suggest that:-

- For 3 weeks per month the drop-in remains as it is for carers to meet and have a break away from the person they care for.
- If carers have difficulty assessing support to get a “break” from the cared for person we will try to help them access funding for this.
- For those carers who want an opportunity to get out and socialize with the cared for person we will help signpost them to local clubs and facilities they could access.
- We will also then explore the possibility of finding a venue for the 4th Wednesday of each month for a luncheon club for carers and cared for to attend. This may help people who find smaller settings more difficult to use and give them the opportunity to engage in a more social way either as carers with or without the people they care for.

We consider that this range of options are a fair compromise and will go some way to meeting a better range of carers needs so that carers have clearer choices about which parts of the service they would like to access.