

Quality and Care Survey Report – December 2015

Background information, what we did and why:

Regular consultation with service users in their preferred format of communication is one way that Deafblind Scotland seeks feedback regarding the quality of the guide/communicator service. It uses this information to ensure the service delivery meets the required standards set out by: The Care Inspectorate, The SSSC codes of practice, various other pieces of legislation and DbS policies and procedures. Also to ensure that the needs of service users are being met. This consultation was carried out in December 2015 and reflects the opinions of 120???(will check this)___ service users who were contacted in the format of their choice. We received 14 replies representing 28% response.

With the Integration of health and social care initiative underway it is hoped that a more joined up system of support will improve services for people who use health and social care services and for others who may need these services in the future promote a more seamless process. This process will be especially beneficial for people with long term conditions and disabilities, many of whom are older people. DbS activities undertaken and promoted by the guide/communicator service promote the priorities of the Reshaping the Care of Older People, Performance Improvement and Care at Home and has always been the ethos of the service in encouraging independence, reducing social isolation, improving physical and mental health and promoting early intervention and prevention. The service has a joint registration with the Care Inspectorate Housing Support and Support Services Care at Home which both work to ensure people can remain at home for longer with some extra support, promoting independence and delaying/preventing admissions to hospital and care homes. The provision enables deafblind people meet a wide range of outcomes including improving health and wellbeing, physical fitness, keeping in touch with family, support to live at home, for example, help with paying bills, shopping, banking, reading mail as well as support with personal care to meet their needs.

Findings

Our consultation with Deafblind people has highlighted the necessity for a skilled workforce and highlights how valued the guide/communicator service is to their lives'. From the practical and essential support of going shopping and paying bills, the importance of having appropriate communication for meetings and attending doctor and hospital appointments and being engaged with their community and being able to be healthy and active.

We asked deafblind people if they feel the G/C Service gives them choice and control about how they live their life.

The responses were very positive with 93% confirming that the guide/communicator service enabled them to maintain independence and make choices, by providing full information in their preferred communication method, this allows them to have control

over their decisions. One commented that sometimes there is no guide/communicator available and they need to cancel an appointment. We are aware of staff difficulties and increasing recruitment in certain areas.

93% of those who replied said that they received full information from the guide/communicator to enable them to have control of their life.

Feedback when asked “**How would you rate the quality of service you receive?**” service users consistently said the service was above average or excellent.

We asked for **suggestions on how we can improve the service**, service users commented:

“I like a variety of guide/communicators sometimes the same all the time is not good”.

“Better communication from the office. Such as informing me if the guide is going to be late and which guide/communicator is coming, or if the guide/communicator is off sick”.

“Short notice availability when required”.

“More guide/communicators with good DBM skills when X is on holiday”.

Some suggested improvements which are out with our control

Another half day would be excellent

Changes in overall mental well being

Improvements were evidenced to the overall mental well being of those who responded.

When asked “How does the service make you feel?” feedback included:

“When I have a guide/communicator I feel fine, if I don’t I feel rubbish as I’m stuck in the house”.

“Good, as I can visit family or do shopping which would be more difficult without this service”.

“I feel more confident when out with guide/communicator”.

“The guide/communicators are good and give me much needed support, which has really helped me physically and emotionally. Without them I would not have achieved so much, especially in the last year”.

“Very happy as I am able to do lots of things and go lots of places”.

Deafblind Scotland encourages feedback from family, friends and carers

“DBS should communicate more with the members. There should be guides on standby to cover cancellations”.

“They are pleased with the help I get. My wife is able to do other things without guiding or helping me. Other family and friends are pleased I can visit them”.

“My family are very happy with the care I get”.

“I was at my cousins last week and he said guide/communicator very good as he can see I get information and involved at meal”.

“My family say the GC service has helped me to be independent, supported me to do thing I would not attempt to do”.

“My mum thinks it is a good service. My mum worries about me going out on my own. She gets on well with the guides”.

“Mary can ask them to get things or explain anything that could be worrying her”.

There are a variety of opportunities to seek comments from friends, family and other professionals. To ensure this is as easily accessible as possible we have developed a link on website to a feedback form, we are reminding service users to encourage them promote to family and friends to use. Also when in contact with social work and other professionals we refer them to this online tool.

Feedback confirms **guides receive sufficient training** to do their day to day work but more training in specialist communication skills would be beneficial.

“knowledge of services in the area, groups, clubs, different things to do”.
“Members involved more in training. Happy to be involved”

For those deafblind people who are in employment the guide/communicator service supports them to continue to work and enables them to undertake the duties of their job.

Deafblind Scotland shapes its service around the needs of deafblind people we value their feedback which informs areas for development. The organisation’s core principles include regular liaison with social work and other agencies regarding services for deafblind people.

We don’t always get things right but we are focused on using service user feedback to improve the quality of the service.

This consultation highlighted the importance of delivering a consistent service and the impact on deafblind people when no guide/communicator is available. We have increased our recruitment drive in some areas, it is proving difficult to identify and recruit suitable candidates, particularly when specialist skills are required.

The consultation indicated that some guide/communicators are better than others. We have always included deafblind people in training where possible, with more service users expressing interest in taking part we are better placed to increase involvement, the training manager himself is deafblind. Deafblind Scotland is committed to ensure guide/communicators have access to ongoing training and personal development opportunities and have an ongoing programme of training available. Our in service days focus on providing training opportunities and sharing of best practice which helps to ensure a high quality service is maintained. Where other issues arise these are discussed at supervision and a robust supervision process is in place, delivered by 6 Senior Guide/communicators who have all completed PDA in supervision.

It was commented that Deafblind Scotland should communicate better with service users, this related mainly to late cancellations. With ongoing reviews of our systems,

improvements are being implemented to our guide/communicator database and more advance notice is given to deafblind people about who their guide is which will be closely monitored and updated.

We know from responses that overall deafblind people feel we deliver a professional, well trained, reliable and flexible service which helps them feel supported, safe and confident to cope with the challenges of everyday life. Almost everyone would recommend the service to other people.

Other service user feedback includes

“It gives me a sense of independence of being able to go where I want to”.

“The guides make me feel secure and confident and knowing they are there for background support in different situations helps”.

“Very happy as I am able to do lots of things and go lots of places”.

“It makes me feel good to get out and I enjoy the companionship, talking to the guides”.