



**Wrexham County Borough Council
Adult Social Care**

Annual Carers Survey Report

2018



1. Introduction

Each September, Wrexham County Borough Council's Adult Social Care (ASC) Department carries out an annual survey of carers registered with the Local Authority in order to gain opinions and views about their life as a carer. These carers may have a relative or friend receiving a service from the department, or they may be supporting someone who is not in receipt of any social care support.

The survey has been designed to collect as much data as possible from adult carers about a wide range of needs, and aims to find out what carers really need and how best they might be supported. Carers' opinions of ASC's performance are also captured.

2. Methodology of the Survey

The survey was conducted through sending questionnaires to active carers registered on ASC's database, as well as publicising the survey on the consultation hub 'Your Voice', the Local Authority's social media channels (WCBC's website, Facebook and Twitter) and through our commissioned carers' service provider NEWCIS.

The survey was formatted into six sections:

1. Support for carers
2. How our services meet the needs of the carer
3. Carer Needs Assessments
4. Carers' Health & Well-Being Outcomes
5. Carer's Grant
6. Carer's Emergency Card

Respondents were also asked to comment on their scoring after the first two sections and also at the end of the survey with regards to what ASC has done well and any areas where we could improve our performance.

3. Key findings

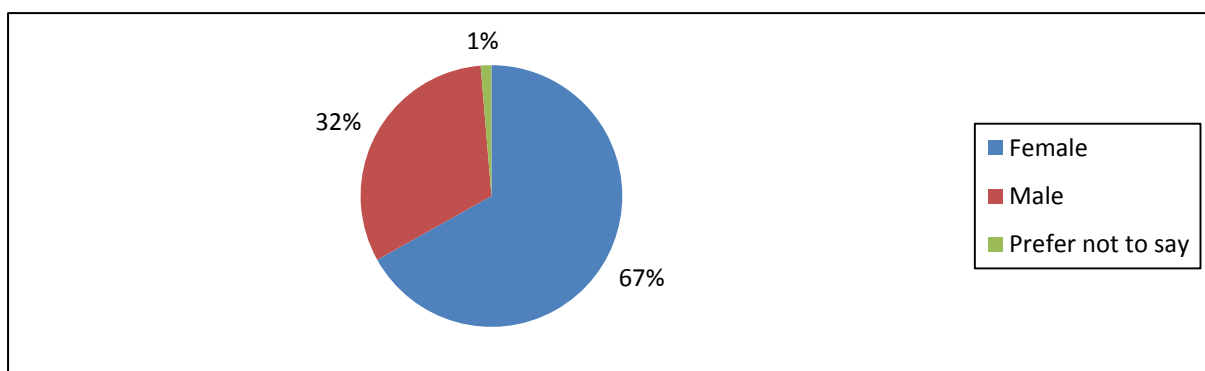
This year 169 carers shared their experience and views with us. This represents a return rate of 17% based on reaching 988 individual carers, which was slightly less than last year's response rate of 19%. 53 incomplete questionnaires were also returned by recipients no longer providing a caring role.

The following statistics have been compiled from the 169 returns received:

3.1 Age of carer

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
25 – 44 years old	10	6%
45 – 64 years old	62	37%
65 – 84 years old	75	45%
85+ years old	9	5%
Prefer not to say	10	6%

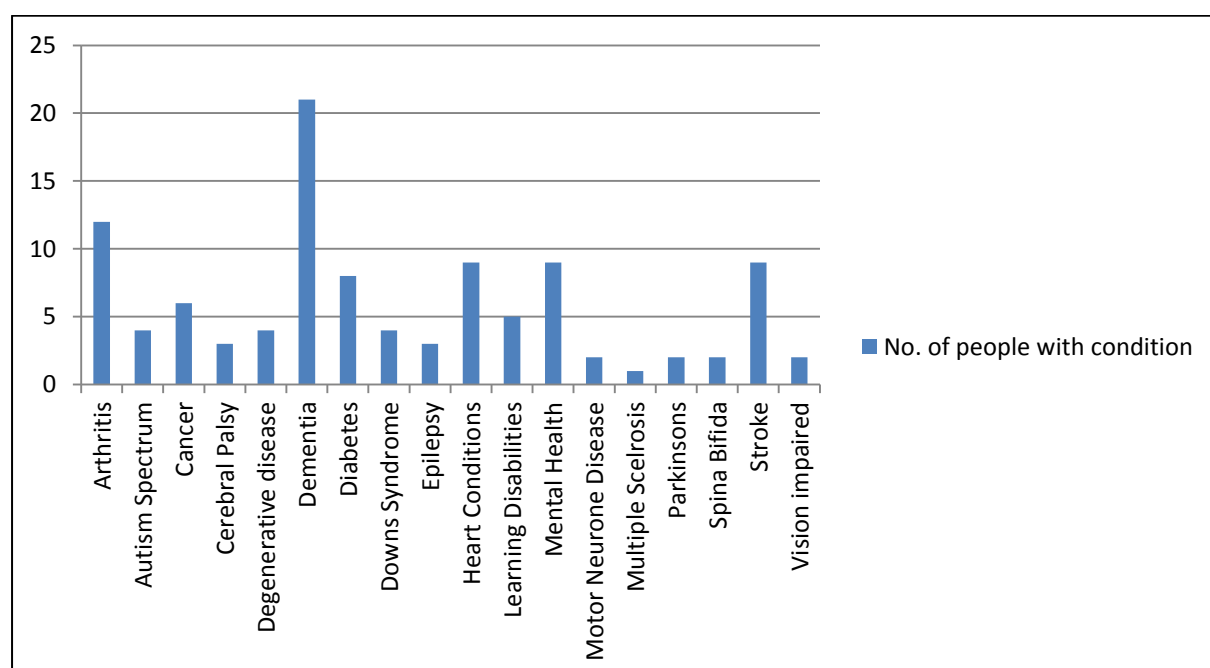
3.2 Gender of carer



3.3 How long have you been a carer?

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
less than 1 year	8	6%
less than 5 years	46	32%
less than 10 years	24	17%
more than 10 years	67	46%

3.4 Person Cared For's specific diagnosed condition



A fifth of the carers who responded are caring for someone with various forms of dementia. However it is apparent from the data that the support needs required are very specific to each individual and the carers are often managing multiple support needs for the person they are caring for.



57% of carers who received support or services agreed that ASC has provided them with a good level of support that has helped to improve their quality of life

54% of carers reported that the outcomes identified during the Carer Needs Assessment helped them in their caring role



76% of carers have not received a Carers Small Grant

3.5 Support for carers

Carers were asked whether they felt supported by ASC through information, advice and assistance that was helpful to them and whether they felt their views as a carer had been listened to. Just over half of the respondents (52%) agreed that we had provided sufficient support and information and in particular half of respondents believe that the service we have provided has helped to improve their quality of life.

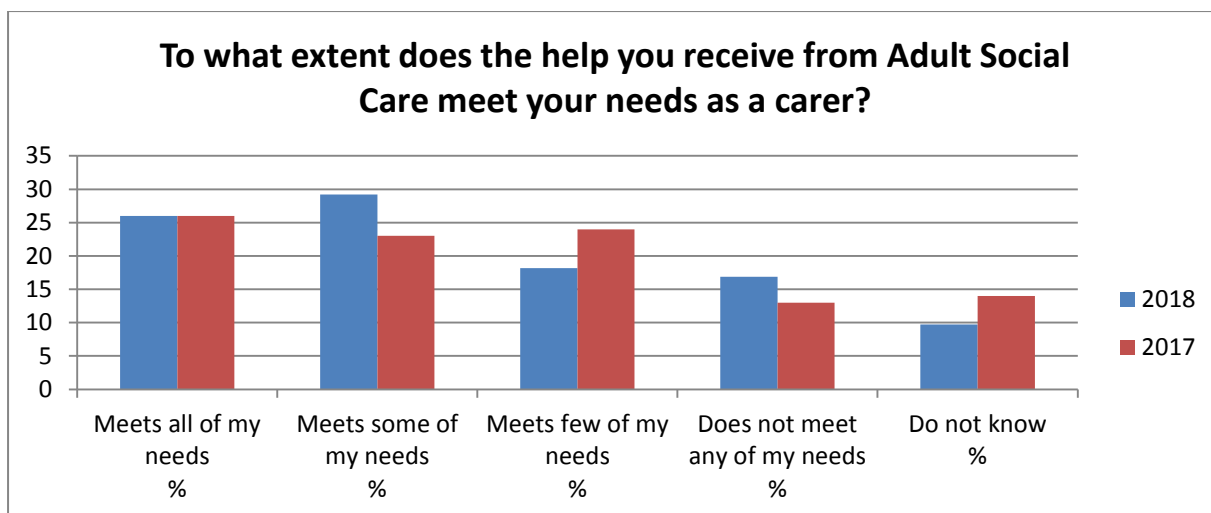
The highest positive response received to one of the questions was by 103 carers who agreed that their views had been listened to when discussing the needs of the person they care for. This shows that the carer is being included in any discussions that take place regarding the person cared for and are considered during any decision making.

Unfortunately 1 in 4 of the carers who responded to the survey stated that access to support from ASC is still not straight forward. We will work with carers to identify an easier way for support to be accessed as we acknowledge this should be straight forward for them when they are providing such a vital role and cannot afford to spend time searching for the information they need.

3.6 How our services meet the needs of the carer

Over half of this year's respondents (63%) stated that we meet some, all or few of their needs as a carer, which is similar to the response in last year's survey.

It is encouraging to see that carers feel they are being supported, however more carers this year than previous years feel that ASC has not met their needs to support them in their caring role. We will continue to work with carers to ensure they receive sufficient help to prevent carer breakdown in the future.



3.7 Carer Needs Assessment

A Carer Needs Assessment is an opportunity for carers to access information, advice and assistance from Wrexham's ASC department.

The number of carers offered an assessment this year has reduced from 2017 but the acceptance rate is an improvement on last year's results as almost half of the carers who were offered an assessment last year declined. These figures suggest that carers are being informed of the importance of the assessment when it is offered to them.

Over 85% of the carers that were assessed felt that the process helped them fully or partially in their caring role. Last year when carers were asked this question, 31% stated that the assessment had not helped them at all. Encouragingly, only 12% share this sentiment in 2018 which suggests that improvements have been made to the outcome focussed assessment process and carers are finding the assessments worthwhile and beneficial.

Have you been offered a Carer Needs Assessment?			
Response	No. of Respondents 2017	No. of Respondents 2018	Variance
Yes	84	76	-8
No	94	66	+28

Did you accept this offer and complete the assessment with a Social Care Worker?			
Response	No. of Respondents 2017	No. of Respondents 2018	Variance
Yes	63	57	+6
No	54	17	+37

However it is important to note that there still appears to be confusion about the Carer Needs Assessment; what it is, who completes the assessment and whether a carer has been offered or even received one at all. Therefore without identifying each carer that answered "No" to this question we are unable to get an accurate response.

3.8 Carers' Health & Well-Being Outcomes

Almost a quarter of respondents to the survey who are currently providing care reported that nothing would help them to feel more confident in their caring role, while 18% of carers feel that they would gain confidence if they knew who to contact within the department as well as a good support network around them.

19% of carers said that they receive information from their GP or District Nurses or charities to support them while they are caring and 15% of the carers feel that the information they receive particularly regarding dementia supports them to continue as a carer. A quarter of carers feel that their own health and well-being has suffered due to them providing care to a relative or friend.

Having a network of support and not having to feel desperate for help

I have arthritis which doesn't get better and I have not had a break from the stress of caring. I could probably benefit from a short break

3.9 Carers' Small Grant Scheme

ASC's Carers' Small Grant Scheme provides financial assistance to carers to purchase items to improve their own health and well-being.

We asked carers what they utilised the grant for and the most common purchase for just under a third of respondents was respite for themselves or the person cared for. We understand that breaks are vital for carers to enable them to continue providing support which can put physical and emotional strain on them.

Other purchases that the carers reported making included:

- Gardening equipment (18);
- Furniture (9%);
- Home improvements (9%) and
- Specialist chairs (6%)

As only a quarter of the respondents claimed to have received a Carers Small Grant from ASC, these figures reveal a large number of carers who are missing out on financial support that could provide them with a much needed purchase to improve their health and well-being, allowing them to continue in their caring role. We will ensure that our new Carers Direct Payment Scheme is promoted widely across Wrexham and through NEWCIS to ensure everyone is aware of this additional funding.



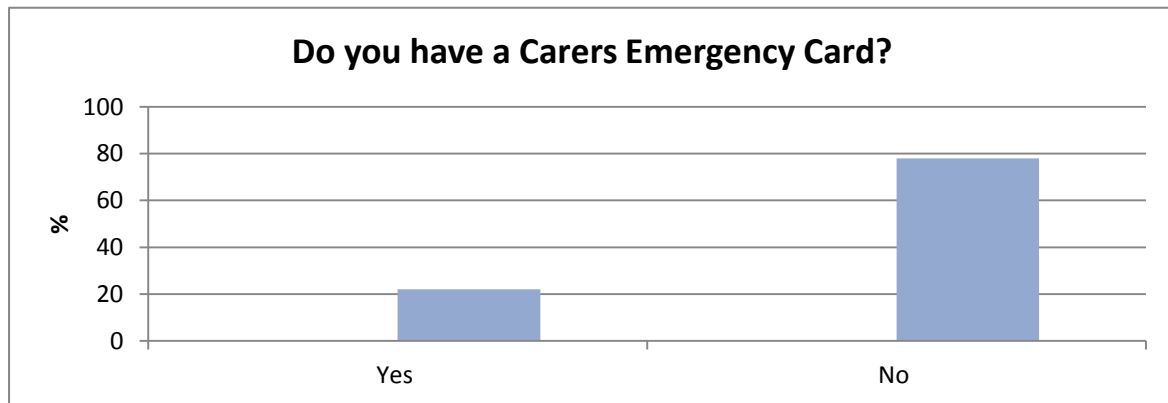
Didn't even know grants were available!

Comments from carers highlighted how these grants made a difference to them and their caring role:

- *"It allowed me 'time off' to be by myself and have a break from caring"*
- *"It was a very kind offer in appreciation of the care provided without dependency on the authority over the years. Being retirement age I'm not eligible for anything due to my income"*

3.10 Carers' Emergency Card

The Carers' Emergency Card puts in place the carer's choice of planned emergency support for the person they care for, offering peace of mind in an emergency. We asked carers for their opinions on the scheme that ASC commissioned British Red Cross to provide until 31st March 2018.



We also asked whether they were aware of the Carers' Emergency Card and surprisingly three quarters of the respondents stated that they were not aware of them with several asking how they could obtain one.

*I need to know how to apply.
It would help if I have to go
into hospital*

The responses show that many carers are still not aware of this preventative service but the carers that do possess a card find it to be peace of mind when they are away from the person cared for.

It helps me to know someone is there if anything happened to me

The confidence and reassurance that I am not alone (nor my husband) in the event of some unforeseen absence

3.11 Adult Social Care's Performance

We asked carers to comment on what ASC has done well throughout the year in support for carers and to also let us know where we could improve (see Appendix 1 for full breakdown of responses).

Similar responses were received this year to 2017; including comments that ASC has not done anything well but also 10% of the responses we received stated that we have provided a good level of support and advice to carers, which is similar to last year. 5% of carers who responded to the survey this year praised us for the respite we have provided. This is pleasing to hear and shows that our respite service, provided by Carers Trust North Wales Crossroads Care Services has been beneficial to carers in Wrexham and has allowed them the break they need to continue caring.

Unfortunately there are still areas where carers feel ASC could improve, the main area of improvement re-appearing again this year is the way in which we communicate with carers which appeared in 14% of the responses. 5% of the responses stated our involvement with carers needs to improve which will be picked up as part of focused work with carers over the next year, following on from the co-production work that was carried out with carers earlier this year when we commissioned our new carers service.

"Helped to get my son a bus pass and given him the confidence to go out to his volunteering job"



"Always returned phone call and always helped me when I've needed it"

"They try their best in difficult circumstances"

"They always help, in every way they can"

"Spoke to [my son] like a person, who is very independent"

"Better communication between all involved. I pass all messages between carers, physios, pharmacy, nurses, OT, GP, social worker. Some days my head is spinning"

"Share information with other local services so information doesn't have to be repeated"



"Keep in touch, things change we feel forgotten"

"Contact carers more often to enquire about their well-being. Visit from social worker occasionally"

"More communication, better understanding, be trained/see it from our side rather than your side!"

4. Conclusion

The comments made in this years' survey are similar to those made over previous years, and the percentage rates have remained fairly static in each question.

The provision of respite through Carers Trust North Wales Crossroads Care Services this year has been gratefully received by the carers. NEWCIS continues to provide carers respite and we will continue to work with carers to identify ways in which they would benefit from this type of support, to ensure that they are able to continue in their caring role.

A continued major concern mentioned by many carers again this year is the lack of or poor contact and communication by ASC in providing support and reassurance to carers. We will carry out work to fully understand these concerns, address any issues that are identified and where possible change the way in which we communicate with carers to ensure they are supported better.

An issue remains for carers on how they can source information to support their role, or how to contact the department for support. The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act places a duty on Wrexham as an Authority in relation to carers and meeting these new requirements, along with the introduction of our carers' service from NEWCIS will hopefully address a number of concerns raised.

5. Recommendations

- The report will be shared with the Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health
- The report will be published on the council's website and the consultation hub, "Your Voice"
- The report will be shared with Care Inspectorate Wales in preparation for the forthcoming inspection of Older People's Service, Adult Social Care

6. Action Plan

Activity	Action	Issues raised	By whom	By when	Complete Y / N
NEWCIS registering carers	Provide contact details to NEWCIS of those carers who ticked "yes" to wanting to register with their organisation	Issues raised – no issues	Commissioning & Contracts Team, ASC	End Nov. 2018	Y
Carers receive accurate and timely information, advice and assistance	Carry out focussed work with carers to address the key areas of concern identified	Issues raised - Carers state they struggle to source information and support and do not know how to contact ASC	Commissioning & Contracts Team, ASC	On-going 2018-2019	
Carers feel supported and reassured to prevent carer breakdown	Carry out focussed work with carers to address the key areas of concern identified	Issues raised – Carers do not feel that they are contacted enough after the initial support from their Social Worker and communication from ASC is poor	Commissioning & Contracts Team, ASC	On-going 2018-19	
Carers are able to apply for the Carers Direct Payment Scheme	Widely promote the scheme throughout Wrexham through the local authority, third sector organisations and health to ensure everyone is aware of their entitlement.	Issues raised – Several carers responded that they were not aware of the scheme and did not know how to apply	Commissioning & Contracts Team, ASC	On-going 2018-19	

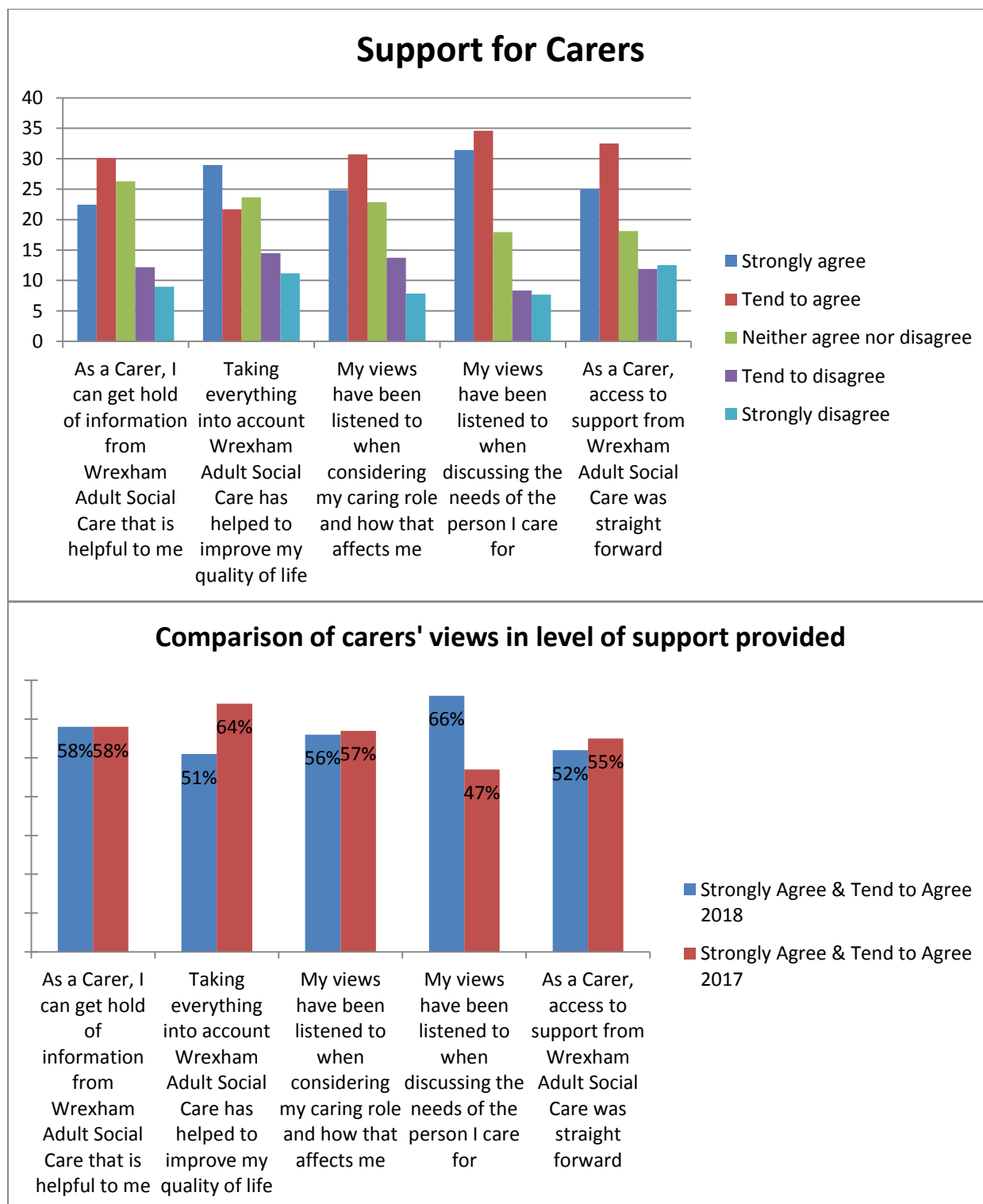
Appendix 1



Data Analysis
2018.xlsx

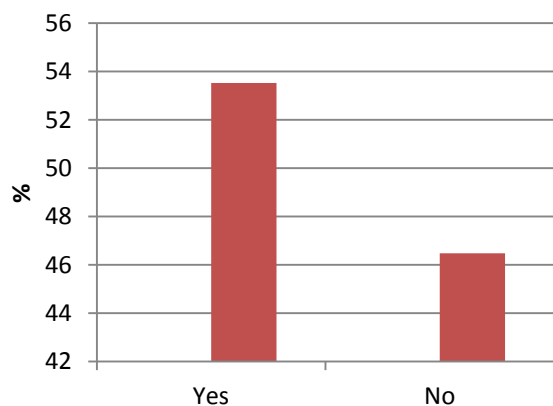
1. Data Analysis

2. Q1 – 5 Support for carers

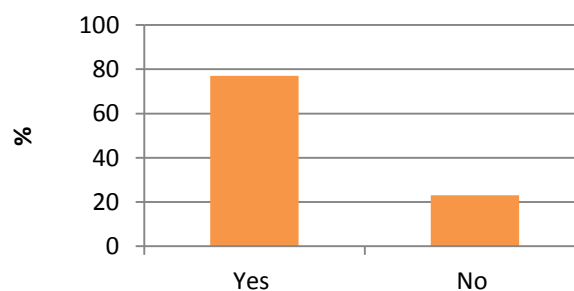


3. Q7 Carer Needs Assessments

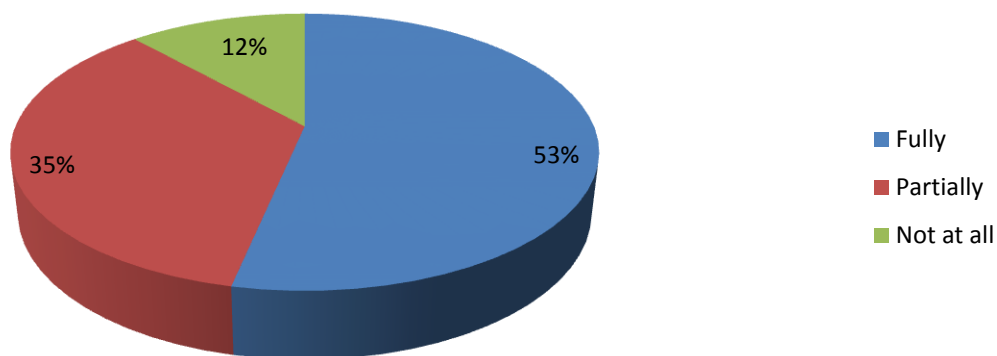
Have you been offered a Carers Assessment?



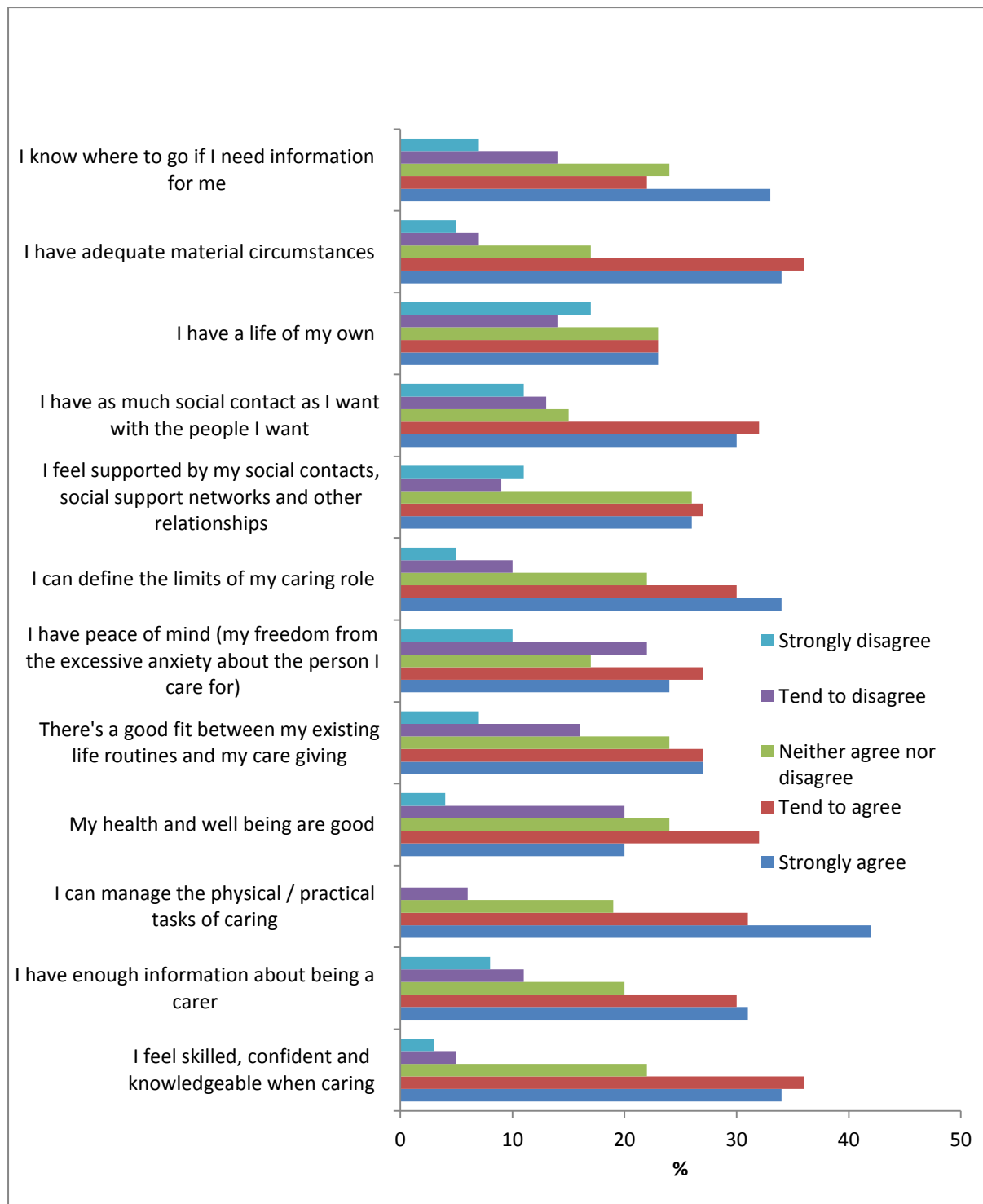
Did you accept this offer and complete the assessment with a Social Care Worker?



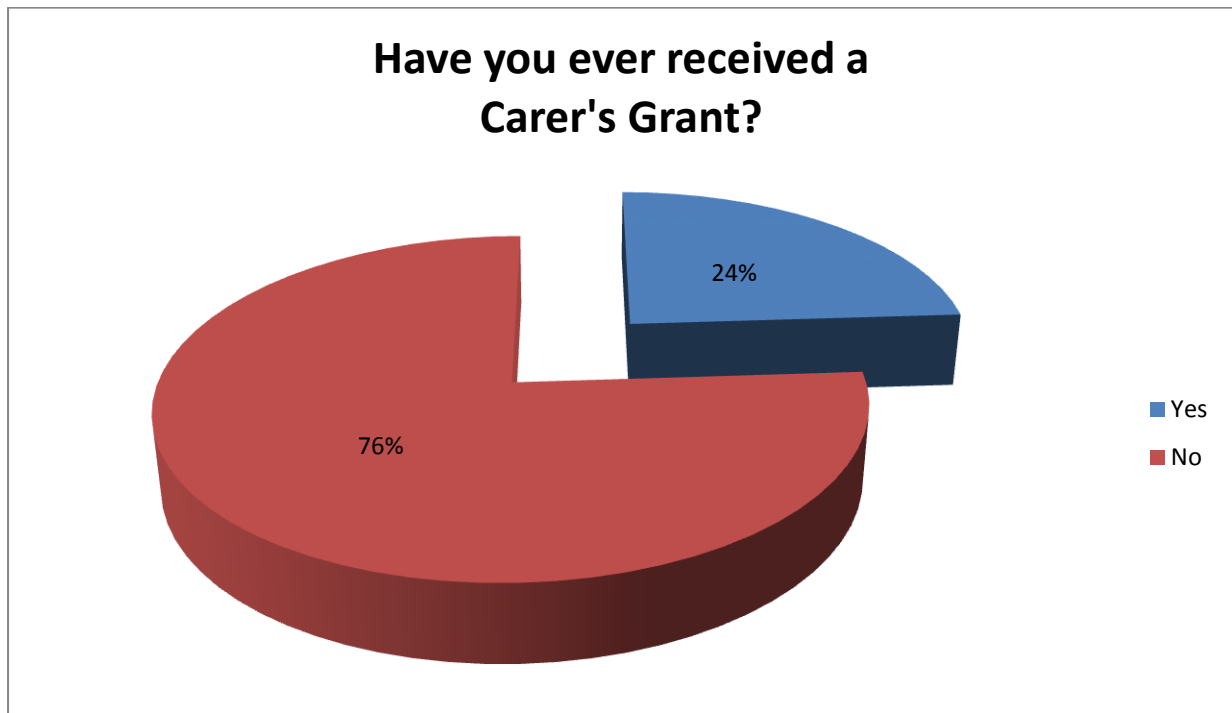
If you completed the Carers Assessment, did the experience and the outcomes identified help you in your caring role?



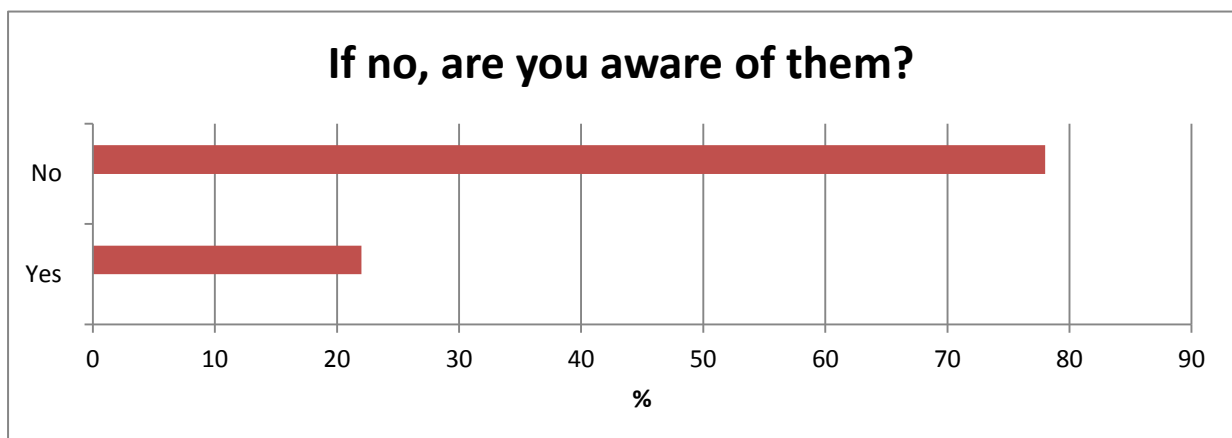
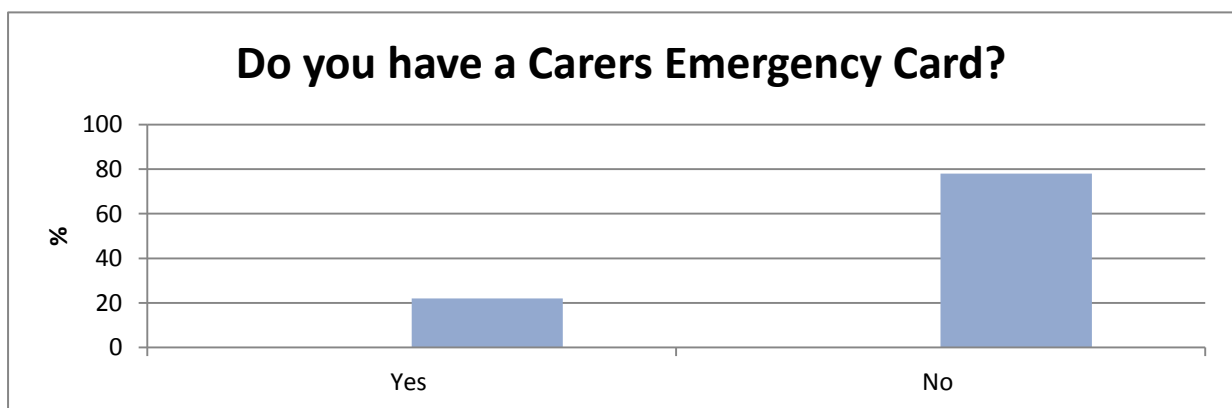
4. Q8 How are you feeling in your caring role?



5. Q9 Carers Small Grant Scheme



6. Q10 Carers Emergency Card



7. Top 5 Themes

Top 5 Sources of Provision of Information	Count of themes	%
Hospital / GP	25	16
Internet	17	11
AVOW	13	8
Charities	8	5
NEWCIS	6	4

Top 5 Themes for Carer's Grant Expenditure	Count of themes	%
Respite break	10	29
Gardening equipment	6	18
Furniture	3	9
Home improvements	3	9
Chair	2	6

Top 5 Themes for Difference Made by Carer's Grant	Count of themes	%
Helped a lot	14	54
Allowed time off	5	19
No help	1	4
Freshened the house	5	19
Mobility aid purchases	1	4

Top 4 Themes for How Carer's Emergency Card has benefitted	Count of themes	%
Peace of mind	20	71
British Red Cross not operating this service anymore	1	4
Not sure what the card is used for	5	18
Never used it	2	7

Top 5 Themes for Improving Support for Carers question	Count of themes	%
No support provided	13	25
Poor communication or no contact	9	17
Adaptations not provided	3	8
Help only provided 9am-5pm	2	4
Process too long and confusing	2	4

Top 5 Themes for “What, if anything would make you feel more confident in your caring role?” – 55 responses	Count of themes	%
Nothing could make me feel more confident	7	13
Knowing who to contact	6	11
Better support	6	11
Better information and advice	5	9
A break	3	5

Top 5 Themes for “What information in particular supports you in your caring role?” – 52 responses	Count of themes	%
General praise for staff	6	12
No information supports me in my caring role	5	10
Improved communication	5	10
Leaflets	2	4
Listen to the person cared for	2	4

Top 5 Themes for “What, if anything would enable you to manage these tasks better?” – 54 responses	Count of themes	%
Improved health	8	15
Find tasks difficult	7	13
Nothing would enable me to manage these tasks better	7	13
More support	6	11
Practical help	5	9

Top 5 Themes for “What, if anything could improve your health and well-being?” – 73 responses	Count of themes	%
Respite / a break	11	15
Suitable support staff	5	7
Better understanding from professionals	5	7
Improved health	4	9
Nothing could improve my health and well-being	3	4

Top 5 Themes for “What, if anything would help you to achieve a better fit” – 42 responses	Count of themes	%
More time to myself	5	12
Caring role dominates life	5	12
Respite	4	10
Hard working whilst caring	3	7
Improved support and advice	3	7

Top 5 Themes for “What, if anything, would give you greater peace of mind” – 53 responses	Count of themes	%
More help and advice	7	13
Nothing would give me greater peace of mind	6	11
Peace of mind for person cared for	5	9
Cuts to services causes concerns	4	8
Improved health of person cared for	4	8

Top 5 Themes for “What, if anything would help you to define your criteria” – 23 responses	Count of themes	%
No limits	7	30
Specific person to contact	3	13
Poor health	2	9
More help	2	9
Nothing would help me to define my criteria	2	9

Top 5 Themes for “What, if anything would help you to feel better supported?” – 46 responses	Count of themes	%
Social Worker contact	9	20
Nothing would help me to feel better supported	7	15
Follow up calls	6	13
Family support	6	13
Feeling valued	2	4

Top 5 Themes for “What, if anything would help you to improve your social contact?” – 34 responses	Count of themes	%
Respite / break	6	17
No social life	5	15
Support	3	9
Nothing would help me to improve my social contact	3	9
Social Work contact	2	6

Top 5 Themes for “What, if anything would help you to have a life of your own?” – 49 responses	Count of themes	%
No life of my own	7	14
Respite / break	5	10
More financial help	4	8
24 hour care so nothing will help	4	8
Improved health	3	6

Top 5 Themes for “What, if anything would help you to have better material circumstances?” – 42 responses	Count of themes	%
Increased household income	10	23
Nothing would help me to have better material circumstances	5	12
Adaptations	4	10
Income threatens benefits	3	7
Better health	2	5

Top 5 Themes for “What, if anything would support you to find the information you need?” – 34 responses	Count of themes	%
Improved information online	5	15
If I knew where to go for information	3	9
Family	2	6
More literature readily available	2	6
NEWCIS	2	6

Top 5 Themes for “How do you feel the quality of your life could be improved?” – 74 responses	Count of themes	%
Time away	18	24
Nothing could improve my quality of life	11	15
Respite	8	11
Support from family	5	7
To feel valued by the LA	3	4

Top 5 Themes for “What more could be done to support you in your caring role?” – 62 responses	Count of themes	%
Extra support	13	21
Nothing could be done to support me more in my caring role	11	18
Social work contact	9	15
Financial support	6	10
Respite	4	6

Top 5 Themes for what has ASC done well?	Count of themes	%
ASC has done nothing well	17	27
General praise	7	11
Support and advice	7	11
Adaptations	4	6
Respite	3	5

Top Themes for what could we have done better?	Count of themes	%
Improve communication	5	14
Improve information and advice	3	8
Listen to carers more	3	8
Respite	2	5
Carer involvement	2	5