



# Reablement Service

Customer Experience Project Summary Report  
May 2013 – June 2013

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## **Executive Summary**

### Key Findings

- All customers interviewed were overall happy with the Reablement service they received.
- It is important to the customers for them to be able to form a relationship with the care workers in order to feel comfortable with them.
- Customers are encouraged to become as independent as possible within their homes. The care workers assist them in re learning skills and trying new strategies.
- The extra equipment supplied on prescription is very useful for supporting care workers in their role and encouraging the customer to try new things and become more confident.
- The service reduced the amount of additional care required after the 6 weeks and in some circumstances the customers did not require any extra care.
- It was identified that the care workers are trained for the diverse physical needs of the customers.
- The majority of the customers are unhappy with the amount of different care workers they received over the six week period.
- Customers expressed an interest in being notified as to which members of staff will be arriving or of delays.

### Recommendations

- Follow up assessments/ meetings to check appropriate care is in place and they are happy with the care they received.
- Check with female customers that they would be happy to receive visits and personal care from a male care worker.
- Keep the number of different care workers to a minimum to enable the customer to build relationships.
- Encourage staff members to build appropriate, formal relationships with the customers.
- Encourage better communication between care providers, staff members and the customers regarding late appointments, staffing and consistency of care.

- Make all hospitals departments, GP surgeries and sign posting services more aware of possible customers.
- Make 'young' care workers aware of intergenerational differences during training, to ensure the customer is comfortable with them.

## **Introduction**

### Background

The purpose of the Reablement Service is to help people re-learn valuable life skills that may have been lost due to a period of illness or incapacity. Service users are gradually encouraged to do more for themselves, with the ultimate goal of becoming as independent as possible, thereby minimising the requirement for longer term care.

Anyone aged 18 or over should be referred to the service where the person's presenting needs indicate that they have the potential to benefit from reablement with the exception of:

- People who need end of life care.
- People whose needs are likely to be best met in residential care.
- People who need specialist therapeutic intervention e.g. specialist rehabilitation, ABI rehab etc.
- People whose needs could be met by the provision of equipment only.

### Objectives

The objectives of the customer experience project are:

- Gain the views of the customers with regards to the overall service.
- Find out aspects of the service are important to the customers and why.
- Find out what aspects of the service worked particularly well.
- Reveal any inconsistencies and areas for improvements.

To gain a county wide perspective the interviews were planned across Lancashire and included the four different care providers, Housing 21, Allied Health Care, Lancashire County Commercial Group (LCCG) and All About You.

## Methodology

The scope of the project was discussed with Dawn Butterfield (Head of Commissioning North – ACS (Lead) and Mike Walker (Research and Intelligence) in March 2013. For the customer experience project the people being interviewed will be referred to as 'customers'.

The research project used face to face interviews to satisfy the objectives. The questionnaires were based on six loose questions that the interviewer was able to use to prompt a conversation around the service. It also allowed for probing and verification and gave an opportunity for a deeper understanding from the users.

The participants were randomly selected from Integrated Social Services Information System (ISSIS) and they were coming to the end of the service or had recently completed the six weeks care. They were approached by telephone one week prior to the interviews and were also called shortly before the interview. The interviews were held in the customers' houses on three consecutive days in April 2013.

In the initial scoping of the project it was suggested that 15 people should be consulted across the county, however due to time constraints and limitations only 12 people were interviewed. Three participants in North Lancashire, four in Central Lancashire and four people in the East Lancashire (one visit was a couple who had received the service).

## Limitations

Due to the nature of the Reablement service it was understood there would be some limitations to the project.

As the majority of the customers are elderly with some receiving care provisions the interviews had to be arranged around them, which meant that certain times of the day were unavailable such as early mornings, lunch and late afternoons. It was also recognised that the customers may have long term health issues such as hearing loss and sight problems.

As these limitations were expected the interviewer made sure that on arrival the customer was comfortable, and asked if they required any assistance or any extra equipment.

However whilst carrying out the interviews more limitations were observed and recorded.

It was unforeseen that the customers may suffer from slight memory issues and may not be able to easily distinguish between the current care packages and the Reablement service. In one particular instance the customer had the service due to her onset of dementia\*. However in some cases this issue had been foreseen by close carers and they attended the interviews too.

\*Please note this was an ISIS error and this person should not have been contacted.

## **Main Research Findings**

When analysing the data five main areas emerged.

### What is working?

All of the customers interviewed were overall happy with the service they received. Initially customers spoke of how the Reablement service was put in place, with most being identified at hospital. The process and service was explained by one point of contact and the assessments were made in hospital. The plans were then put in place for their arrival home, and the majority of customers said it was an efficient and easy process.

In one case a woman was receiving the service following a fall. One week after commencing the service her husband came home also requiring the service. It was mentioned how well the packages were combined and their individual needs were met at the same time. Another customer said how adaptable the service was after leaving hospital it was noted that she required less support and it was reduced within a week.

Another area highlighted was the extra equipment some people received as a prescription to help them in the reablement process. This aspect was particularly important as the equipment allowed them to feel secure in becoming independent and they felt supported by staff to use them.

For the majority of the cases the care workers were highly praised for several reasons. The customers preferred the regular care workers as it was extremely important to be able to build a relationship with them. They enjoyed being able to talk to the care workers and "...have a laugh". In one case in East Lancashire (LCCG), the customer had three different care workers over the 6 week period and knew one of them. This allowed her to feel comfortable with the carers quickly and build strong relationships. It was mentioned by several customers that the care workers were patient, understanding and listened to their individual needs. However, some of the people did not like to ask for help and preferred it when the staff knew in advance what to do. One customer who received care from Housing 21 said "It seemed that it wasn't just a job to them".

Another aspect of the care was the encouragement to try new things and relearn old skills such as how to use the microwave. Three customers mentioned how the care workers suggested new and improved ways carrying things out to. This made people feel confident in themselves and allowed them to live more independently.

It was also mentioned by several people how well trained the staff are to their individual needs, which is even more distinguishing given the diverse range of reasons why people access the Reablement service, and what they require.

On four occasions there were family members or informal carers at the interviews, each of these people expressed the relief at knowing someone is regularly visiting the customer. This was also reflected in three customers who also mentioned this. It was particularly important for the people who lived alone and felt most vulnerable when beginning the service.

### Positive outcomes

During the interviews the customers were asked what difference has the service made to their lives. In the majority of cases people answered positively as it has allowed them to remain in their own home and stay independent. As the customers have been encouraged to relearn skills or become more confident in themselves, they have become more positive and feel safer. An informal carer who witnessed care provider by All About You said the customer "...has come on leaps and bounds since the Reablement has started."

Three customers mentioned that they require less or no extra care since they have finished the service, which has allowed them to save money. One man in Central Preston, who received care from Housing 21, was unsure of the care he required, and the Reablement service allowed him "... to discover what I actually needed."

Three customers and four informal carers said how the service has given them peace of mind by, knowing someone will visit regularly.

### Endorsements

The customers were asked 'If you were to describe the service to your family or friends, what would you say?' These are the comments below.

Four customers said they *"Strongly recommend the service"*

Four customers said they *"Would be happy to use it again."*

*"On the whole very satisfied."*

*"I would say that they're worth everything, they're a treasure. I would recommend them to anyone."*

*"A very positive experience"*

*"A system to help you get back on your feet"*

As you can see the comments are very complimentary of the overall service.



## What is not working?

During the interview the customers were asked if there were any aspects of the service that did not work well or needed improvements. This question proved difficult for some as they did not want to complain or could not think of anything. When asked if they felt they were able to complain and knew who to contact, they answered yes. However, during the conversations some issues were highlighted and the interviewer probed deeper to get a better understanding of the issues.

Eleven of the customers were unhappy about the amount of different care workers they received over the six week period and the inconsistency in times and staffing. No one received a timetable of the care workers and they never knew who was going to turn up. This was a particular issue for the customers who had onset of dementia or memory issues and their families. The numbers of different care workers varies massively with one person receiving care from LCCG receiving four carer workers and someone with the care provider Housing 21 receiving 11. However they all expressed a wish to have fewer. Staffing seemed to be a particular issue over the holiday periods with staff members having to explain the lack of consistency to the customers.

One customer who received care from All About You had the care package set up whilst in a care home and was set to receive it as soon as she arrived home in the afternoon, but the carers did not come until the morning.

Two Housing 21 customers mentioned that the care workers were regularly late for appointments, but also said they were able to appreciate that some people before them may require extra care. However they would have liked some kind of notifications so they are not waiting too long.

One customer who received care from Allied Health Care said that they did not like having a male care worker. This issue was mentioned by several others, but they could appreciate that the male care workers were well trained and it was personal preference.

For one customer who received the service from LCCG, the service was put into place too late. As it had been a month after her accident the customer was quite independent by the time the service was put into place, although she could appreciate how useful the service had been. An Allied Health Care customer did not seem happy with the assessment she received as she did not have appropriate equipment for her specific health needs, however this may not be due to the Reablement service. The couple who received Reablement from Allied Health Care have been left with a lot of equipment that they no longer require, but cannot return it.

A customer who received care from Allied Health Care said that one particular care worker was unhelpful and had "... a bad attitude". When asked if she was able to complain to the care provider she said she had complained and the person in question never returned. However another Allied Health Care

customer, who did not complain, had one particular care worker that did not help or assist until asked, which was an issue.

One particular issue was highlighted by a family member. The carer having found no answer left and did not notify anyone until the evening. The family was not notified of this absence until after the event and no attempt was made to check the customer was safe.

Two customers from Allied Health Care and All About You mentioned that some of the care workers were "young" and "weren't as experienced" as the older care workers. It was mentioned that they had nothing in common with them and therefore found it hard to build a relationship with them. Although this is not a negative aspect of the service, it may be something to consider when training care workers.

Unless specifically mentioned in this report, these issues went unknown by the care providers as people did not want to complain.

### Improvements

All of the customers were asked "If you were to access the service again what improvements or changes would enhance the experience?" Again this was a hard question for people to answer as they did not want to be seen as complaining and were happy with the service they received overall.

The main improvement that was mentioned by the customers was the request to have fewer care workers over the six week period. It was also mentioned that there should be better communication between the care provider, the staff and the customer about to rotas, holidays and lateness.

### **Conclusion**

- All customers interviewed were overall happy with the Reablement service.
- The service allowed the customers to stay in their homes, feel more confident in themselves.
- Service reduced the amount of additional care required after the 6 weeks and in some circumstances the customers did not require any extra care.
- The majority of the care workers were helpful and encouraged the customers to become independent. They also suggested new ways of completing tasks.
- The extra equipment that is supplied during the Reablement service is very helpful.

- It is helpful to the customers and families to know someone is going to visit regularly.
- Customers would prefer consistently regular care workers as it is important for them to be able to build a relationship with them.

### **Recommendations**

- Follow up assessments/ meetings to check appropriate care is in place and they are happy with the care they received.
- Check with female customers that they would be happy to receive visits and personal care from a male care worker.
- Keep the number of different care workers to a minimum to enable customer to build relationships.
- Encourage staff members to build appropriate, formal relationships with the customers.
- Encourage better communication between care providers, staff members and the customers regarding late appointments, staffing and consistency of care.
- Make all departments hospitals and GP surgeries more aware of possible customers.
- Make 'young' care workers aware of intergenerational differences during training, to ensure the customer is comfortable with them.