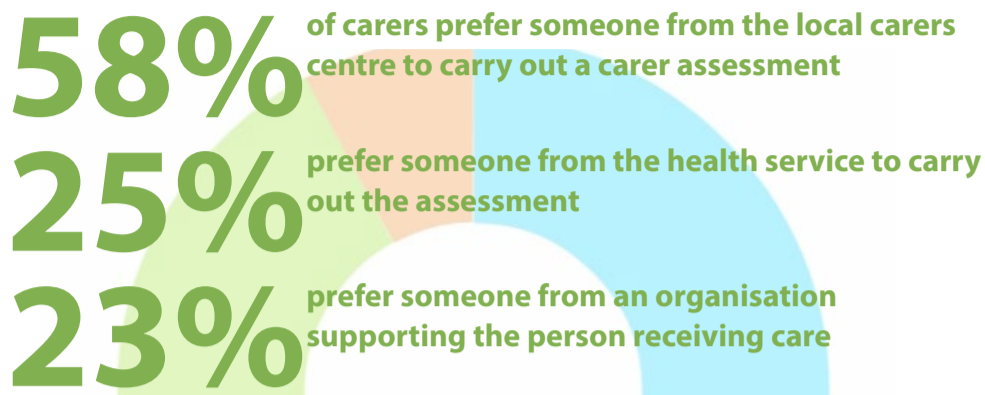


# Carer Survey 2013

## Carer Assessments & Support



Carers feel strongly that an assessor should be caring and understanding of carers' needs. The knowledge, understanding and specialist skills of the assessor were considered more important than the agency that the assessor came from.

The majority of carers considered that information and advice, emotional support and counselling, condition-specific training and regular breaks from caring should all be provided by right and free of charge for carers.

*"Someone from a carers centre like VOCAL."*

*"It's the quality of the assessor that counts. Someone wise, knowledgeable and compassionate from any organisation."*

## Self-Directed Support (SDS)



Many carers expressed fears about how SDS might affect current levels of benefits, quality of care and the availability of services from carer organisations.

Carers did not feel well informed about SDS and wanted to know more about it and how it might affect them. Carers were concerned about the responsibility and time needed to manage Direct Payments. Some carers felt that the introduction of SDS might be used as a means of cost cutting for local authorities.

*"As I know nothing about the proposals I am concerned about their effect on my role and opportunities as a carer."*

*"I fear the quality of care and finances will be greatly affected."*

## Using Technology



Older carers were less likely to have used the internet.

More than a third of carers expressed interest in obtaining support to use the internet if this were offered. Carers favoured support at home (19%); via the local library (15%) and at a local carers centre (12%).

Carers who had never used the internet said this was due to cost of equipment and/or broadband; a lack of motivation in using the internet e.g. lack of time or energy to tackle computers; no perceived need or interest in using computers; a sense of being 'too old' to bother and the carer's own incapacity.

*"Too busy caring to take time out to learn but would like to."*

*"Don't know how and a bit scared to try."*

*"I am not clued up with it and cannot afford internet at home"*

## Economic well-being



More carers indicated that they were more interested in aspects of financial planning now than in the future.

Carers wanted support on financial matters, entitlement to benefits, pensions, childcare and related financial matters.

Combining employment with caring was an area where many carers wanted support. Issues included giving up employment to care; support to get back into employment; concerns for the person receiving care if the carer returned to work. A number of carers wanted financial support for their caring role.

*"The person I care for is not stable at present and it is very hard to plan for the future."*

*"I gave up a full time job to give my mother more of my time."*

Comments received from carers across the survey illustrate a wide range of caring situations and a wide range of needs and responses to the difficulties and challenges of caring. In personal comments, many carers expressed overwhelming emotions of stress, pressure, anxiety and concerns as they seek to manage often

exhausting caring responsibilities. Often there was little time or energy to negotiate contact with external agencies and systems. The survey also suggests that carers have strong views regarding carers' assessments and concerns regarding their lack of knowledge of Self-Directed Support (SDS).

