

FOCUS ADULT SOCIAL CARE PROJECT

housing



Date: December 2025

social worker



my money



about me



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Disclaimer

Please note: This report is based upon feedback provided to Healthwatch North East Lincolnshire from service users, members of the public and professionals. The findings are based upon individuals' perceptions, which are not verified for factual accuracy.

Quotes in the report are written as received, to ensure opinions are kept in context, as such there may be grammatical errors within quotes.



1 Introduction

1.1 About Us

We are the independent champion for people who use health and social care services. We exist to make sure that people are at the heart of care. We listen to what people like about services and what could be improved. We share their views with those with the power to make change happen. We also help people find the information they need about services in their area.

We have the power to make sure that people's voices are heard by the government and those running services. As well as seeking the public's views ourselves, we also encourage services to involve people in decisions that affect them. Our sole purpose is to help make care better for people.

In summary Healthwatch is here to:

- Help people find out about local care.
- Listen to what people think of services.
- Help improve the quality of services by letting those running services and the government know what people want from care.
- Encourage people running services to involve people in changes to care.

1. Background

Who are Focus Independent Adult Social Work C.I.C?

Focus Independent Adult Social Work is a Community Interest Company (C.I.C.) for adults that reside in North East Lincolnshire. Focus was set up in 2013 and works in partnership with the local council and Integrated Care Board (ICB).

Focus employs over 160 staff, and works with local charities, other social enterprises, the Council and health organisations to help improve the well-being of local people

What do focus do?

Social workers, employed by Focus provide advice and guidance, assess people's needs, and arrange services to meet these needs. They also review and adjust support plans and services accordingly.

Focus provides training courses to public and private care organisations and supports organisations with compliance with relevant legislation, such as the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and Safeguarding.

Focus also assess required financial contributions to support with costs, taking into account additional needs due to a disability or infirmity when agreeing to contributions. Focus collaborates with a wide range of social care and health providers in both the public and private sector to improve the quality and efficiency of local health and well-being services.

The Learning Disability Team

Healthwatch asked Focus specific questions about the learning disability team, and we were provided with the responses below.

1. **What is the role of the team?** – We do not have a standalone LD team; we have a small number of practitioners / co-ordinators within the Social Work Outreach Team who specifically work with clients with disabilities including supporting young people through transition / preparing for adulthood.
2. **Is the team specifically for persons with a learning disability or do transitions, autism, sensory or any other conditions sit under the team** – all the mentioned sit within this area.
3. **How many staff are employed in the L/D team are they all social workers or do you employ other roles within the team** – we have 6 qualified practitioners (both social workers and nurses) & 3 social work co-ordinators.
4. **How many individual cases sit within the team.** – 409 cases across the staff
5. **Do staff receive training in learning disability awareness** – Yes
 - The Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training on Learning Disability and Autism (mandatory)
 - Neurodiversity Awareness (available training)
 - Neurodiversity Awareness for Supervisors & Recruitment (available training)
 - SDP Neurodiversity – Harnessing the Superpower, calming the noise (available training)
 - Autism Reality Experience (available training)
6. **Do staff have access to easy read documents for L/D service users** – Not within Focus but CPG will support with specific request with assistance from SALT.



1.1 Why this subject?

Focus Adult Social Care approached Healthwatch North East Lincolnshire to reach out to learning disability Service Users, their families, carers and support providers that have experience of using their service.

The aim of the project was to gather the views of people that use the service to see what is working well and where things could be improved.

2. Research

There are approximately 1.3 million people with a learning disability in England, including over 950,000 adults aged 18 or over. Statistics show that people with a learning disability are more likely to live in poverty (31% compared to 18%) and more likely to experience chronic loneliness (50% compared to 15–30%) LeDeR (2021) states that the median age at death for people with a learning disability is 62 years, while the median age for the general population is 82.7 years (All Our Health, Gov.UK,2025)

([Learning Disability - Social Care Research and Stats | Mencap](#))

Over 1 million adults in England accessed long-term or short-term social care support in England in 2023/24.

Of these adults, **127,610 working-age adults and 21,760 older adults (65+)** with a learning disability received long-term support in England.

859,000 adults accessed long-term support during 2023/24.

Among adults aged 18 to 64, almost half (48%) of all social care activity was for people whose main support need was a learning disability.

Of these, only **14.1%** of clients receiving care services were in a nursing setting. This proportion increases to **47.6%** for clients in community support and rises further to **59.4%** for those in residential care.

Social care can be very important in helping people with a learning disability to live their life in the way they choose, like anyone else.



Support can be many things, including supporting somebody to get up and get dressed, to develop friendships and relationships or to do meaningful activities and be part of their local community.

3.Methodology

Healthwatch produced a survey that was available online via the Healthwatch North East Lincolnshire Website, via a scannable QR code and a printed paper version. We also adapted the standard survey to be available in easy read. Healthwatch Freepost envelopes were also provided to participants so that they could post back their completed surveys; this ensured people could remain anonymous if they wished to do so. Wherever possible, surveys were also handed out during regular engagement sessions.

The survey was live on our website and was also regularly shared across our social media platforms.

In person engagement took place with the following organisations across NEL. This gave us opportunity to have face to face conversation with people about their experiences and to help people have their say if they are unable to complete a digital or paper survey.

Nurtrio Supported Living Services	Better together for SEND	The Rock Foundation
Cromwell Road Day Centre	Parent Carer Forum	Nurtrio office (staff)
Carers Support Service	Kirklees	Burchester Court
CPG Walking group		

We emailed the surveys, links, Q.R Codes and paper copies for distribution, sharing and completion with the following organisations.

- Foresight
- Humbercare
- Linkage

- Care Plus Group
- Bradly Apartments
- Penderel's Trust
- Home form Home Care- The Old Vicarage
- Community L/D Team
- The Intensive Support Team/ FOLS
- Mencap
- PCN Network
- Have your say NEL
- Families First Information Service
- SENDIASS
- Cambridge Park School
- Humberston Park School
- Short Break Scheme

We received a total of fifty survey responses. Thirteen from service users using the easy read survey and twenty-three from our standard survey. We have examined the results, and the key findings are provided in this report. Responses from the public and professional surveys have been analysed and highlighted over the following pages.

Disappointingly the online survey link was viewed many times yet there were only 14 digital surveys completed. This finding shows that in this instance people prefer to or find it easier give face to face feedback or complete a paper survey about their personal experience, rather than fill in a digital form.

3. Key Findings:

The feedback was broken down into two sections; service user feedback via easy read surveys and feedback via our standard survey and online survey.

These are responses we received from the service user easy read survey and the conversations we held in person.

We asked:

What is Focus Adult Social Care, what do they do?

"Yes, Liz is my worker its social work"

"No but I have got a social worker"

" Not really I think they got me my carer"

" I don't know if I have a social worker"

"Finances- I have a social worker called Mags"

"I know they come all the time, my brother helps too"

"Social worker-Claire"

"I'm not sure if I have a social worker-I don't know- I live with two men and two women"

"I've heard of it my mum deals with everything"

"Liam is my keyworker"

"They help people"

"I've lived in supported living for 10 years. Focus fund my support and hold my review every year"

How do Focus contact you?

"I haven't seen her in ages. I get a letter and staff put it in the diary"

"They come to see us"

"They just turn up"

"They might send a letter"

"They might ring staff"

"Phone the staff"

"Ring the staff"

"Visit the house"

"Ring mum"

"Come to my house"

"They come to see me, send me letters"

When you meet with Focus do you understand what your meeting is about?

"Sometimes I might not understand the answer, she has to explain again"



"Our support worker helps us understand- I don't like meetings"

"I do with help from my mum and staff"

"It's a lady -staff will help me if I don't understand"

"No, I don't understand "

"sometimes"

"Staff help me"

"Mum has to explain I don't know what the meetings are about"

"Mum and stepdad help"

"Yes, although there is a change of worker a lot and I can't get to know anyone"

What could Focus do better?

"I don't know"

"Visit me more"

"Have the same worker"

"Come and see me more"

"Same worker- get to know them. When they organise my review, they should ask me when is suitable for me first"

What are Focus doing well?

Service user gave a thumbs up they are doing a good job

"They are doing alright"

"Good job they help me out with my finances"

"Help me with my family issues"

"Three days at Cromwell Road is just right"

"I like where I live"

"Best move ever I like my house, and I like the people I live with"

"2 days at centre works well"

"I like where I live and the staff"

"I like my house where I live"

"I'm not sure"

"I love where I live, staff are brilliant, my house mates are lovely, transition was brilliant it was IST that sorted that"

Is there anything else you want to tell us about Focus Adult Social Care?

"Focus and the government look after our money"



"I love the disco, Dirty Dancing and Strictly come Dancing"

"I'm in charge of myself"

"My house mate stands on my feet and pulls my hair" (after investigation this was found to be historic and had been dealt with appropriately by the support provider)

"I have 4 days at the centre and Friday at home to help with dusting"

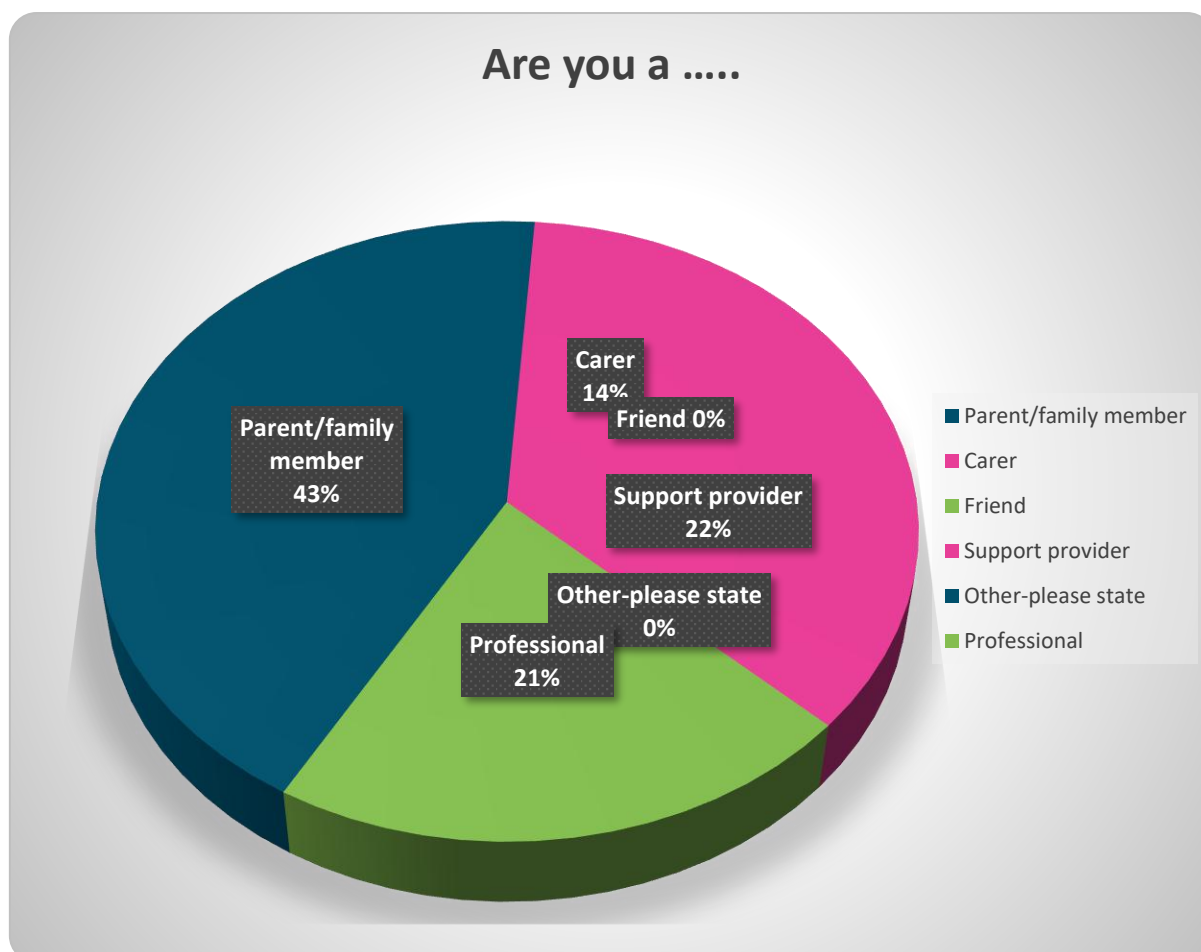
"I'm always grateful for them placing me where I am"

The Initial diagnostics:

Responses received via the standard survey:

Question 1. Are you a?

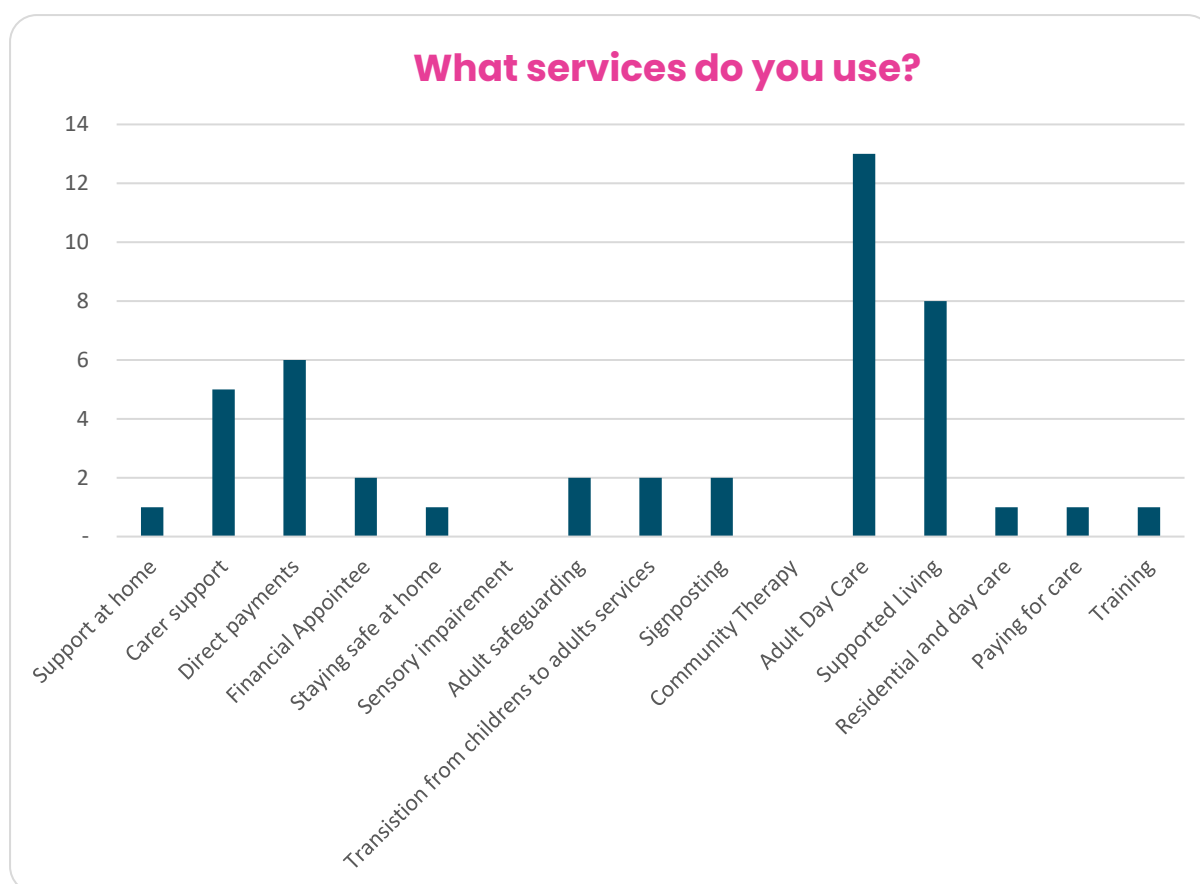
We asked people to state whether they were a parent /family member, carer, friend, support provider, professional or other. We received the biggest response from parents/family members followed by support providers.



Question 2 What is your involvement with Focus Adult Social Care?

We asked this question to determine what services individuals were using ,or had experience of and what area the feedback related too.

Most people who answered this question selected adult day care and supported living. Although we identified that a variety of service provisions were used by people in North East Lincolnshire.



The responses we received from completed surveys are as follows.

- Training
- Liaising with staff
- Finances
- Referrals
- Meetings with social workers
- Financial appointees

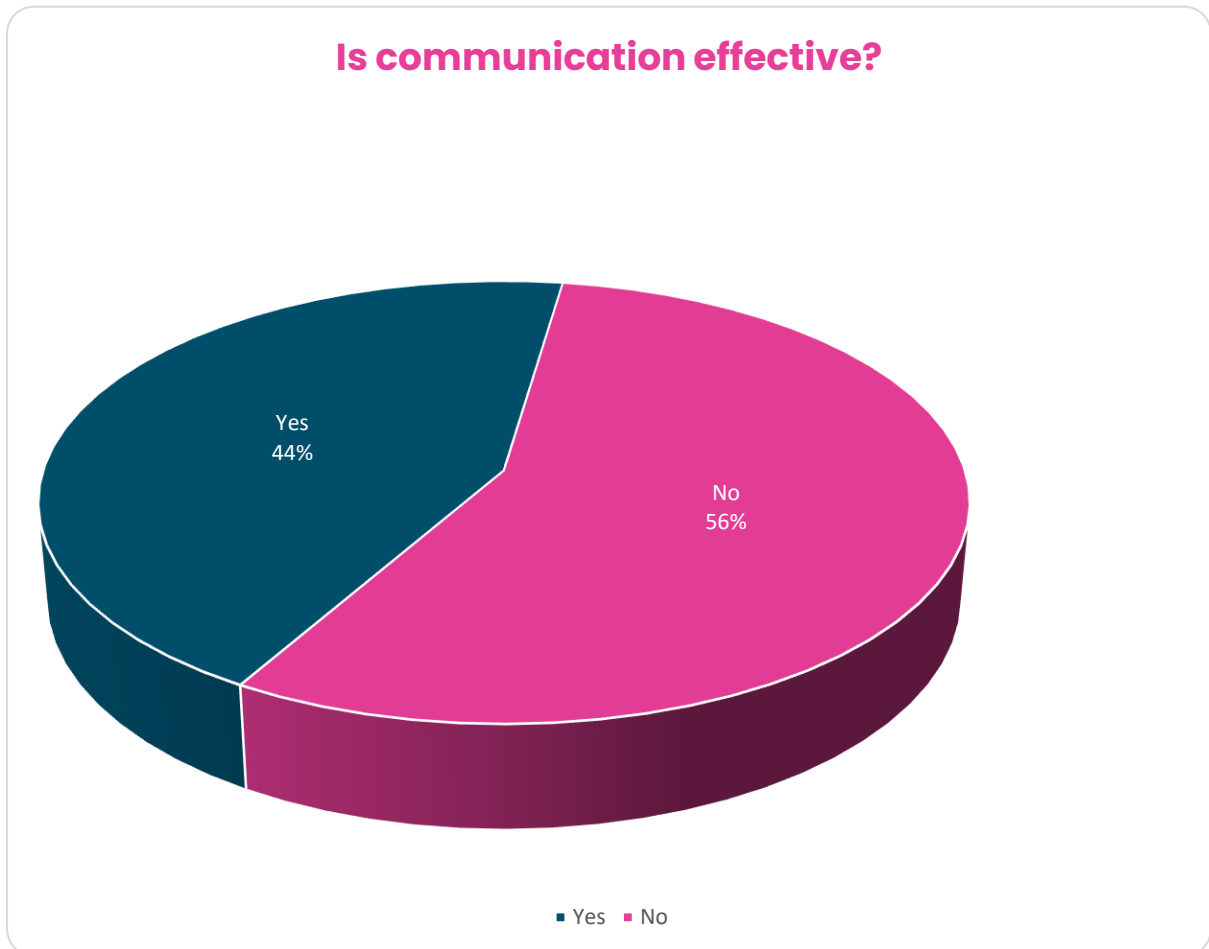


- Discussing housing related support
- We refer to Focus
- days at day care
- I'm a parent carer for our daughter who has learning disabilities
- Our daughter attends day care
- My son has a learning disability
- We receive direct payments
- I'm a keyworker
- Transition officer at day centre
- I am service coordinator for 3 services in supported living; I liaise with Focus Adult Social care for reviews or any concerns.
- I work for a support provider and have a lot of service users that fall under Focus
- Carer support
- We are a local social care provider, Nurtrio Ltd and we have daily contact with staff from focus through the fact that we provide supported living, domiciliary care, direct payment support services (PASS) and Meals on Wheels. We have contact with social workers, financial appointees and the Adult Safeguarding Team. A lot of our staff also attend various training opportunities.
- Adult safeguarding
- Adult day care services
- I am a service user and still waiting for them to provide me with a support worker!
- Support at home
- Direct payments
- My stepdaughter who still lives with us is waiting 4 years for supportive housing



Question 3 Is communication effective?

We asked people if they felt communication with Focus Adult Social Care was effective.



We asked respondents to provide further information on the effectiveness of communication

We were told:

- There is no response to emails, its hit and miss I've tried up to 4 times before someone gets back to me.
- Tried ringing this morning, informed the worker wasn't taking calls.
- We were not informed of change of worker.
- I've never had an issue they always get back in touch.

- They have a good social media presence.
- I always call them if I'm unsure on P.A and P.A paperwork.
- Initially was mostly ineffective-has improved somewhat as of late- but still not 100% effective or satisfactory.
- Not always as I can't have my phone with me at work as I'm a T.A in a school.
- Very poor
- Not really – we very rarely get any information from them when we need it.
- Yes, it's usually an email.
- Yes. Mostly
- Some are good some not
- MDTs- Not keeping in contact, changes happening and not being kept in the loop, we only hear from them when they want something from us.
- Sometimes- It fails when Focus workers off sick and we don't know so send emails and they aren't answered. Lack of info – reviews are held and we are not invited, and we don't get up to date support plans.
- Most of the time get a prompt reply, I am new to the role of working in supported living and all social workers have been understanding and informative.
- Emails are often not responded to, I have emailed several times before getting a response on multiple occasions. Social workers don't always attend pre-arranged meetings. Social workers are often unresponsive or seem to lack interest in the needs of service users. Social workers are often rude and patronising to service users, staff and their families.
- The office are effective, they pass messages on, they always answer phone in prompt, kindly manner
- Communication is key to getting right results to any issues. If you don't communicate properly then the right care or help for the right issue cannot be resolved
- It would be helpful if this was not just a yes/no question as the communication can sometimes be very effective; it is totally dependent on the individual worker.
- I have not been contacted by Focus for a long time
- Very dismissive and rude at the beginning and I've heard absolutely nothing since been told I am entitled to 6 hours a week.

- Supposed Long term active assigned social care workers can cease in a matter of weeks or months having done no work and had no communication either via email or phone. Documents like social care plans not emailed out to parent, and sometimes not to care provider agency giving support.
- Often not available poor communication

Question 4 What would you like to see improved and why?

We asked people to specify what they would like to see improved and why.

- Consistency of worker – they change a lot and that's not good for the resident, they book appointments and don't turn up.
- Communication.
- No direct line of contact apart from the main switchboard – just can't get hold of people.
- More allocated support hours
- To keep the same social worker, they change staff all the time.
- Nothing – the team has always helped me when needed.
- Communication- both in methodology and delivery. Attitudes of Focus staff varies greatly from person to person- in my humble opinion.
- We've had three social workers in three months !
- Provision for respite
- More information about support in the community.
- Having to fight for everything. Lack of communication, Not giving adults with L/D the right to choose where they live, saying direct payments aren't available when they are, constantly losing paperwork, causing parents a lot of stress and headache.
- Involve us in meetings- not just when they have got what they need. Listen to staff – we know them really well.
- Some social workers seem poor at responding to emails/messages and some tasks take a long time to action.
- Listen to day service staff as we know them really well. They make decisions without our involvement, consider taking on our opinions.
- Support plan/care plan to be given ahead of time so we can read and use them.
- Have the correct facts, don't give false information

- Focus should attend EHCP meetings so things can be planned and acted upon.
- S/Users age concern – not moving them on from day centres until they pass away – that’s not very person centred.
- Communication between departments
- Increase contact at point of transition to help signpost to available services.
- Invite support staff to meetings and reviews as appropriate
- The attitude of most staff seems to be that we shouldn't be bothering them
- The website does not contain contact details for any individual workers, and it is almost impossible to access them. It would also be helpful to have an organisational chart on the website in order to gain an understanding of the structure.
Regular contact. Not make services so complicated that focus staff and families know what they are doing
The system needs changing asap!
- Regular check-ins with those using service who have disability. Better and useful communication with service users and families/carers.
Keeping in touch
- They need to improve transparency, communication, and respect for confidentiality. Service users should always be told when their information is accessed and why. Consent must be explained clearly, and boundaries should be respected

Question 5. What are Focus doing well?

- We have recently been allocated Liz (social worker) for the whole building, this is brand new but we have a good rapport and it’s working well.
- Training is good
- Reviews are regular and up to date.
- Listening well
- Training is well delivered
- Good communication
- Listen well and extensive knowledge
- Social media
- Explaining things, I’m unsure of

- Contact and information is good
- Unsure how to answer that! – the word “nothing” springs to mind initially! However, we now (after much to-ing and fro-ing) have a contact person who is very amenable and helpful- but she is obviously not party to all and helpful-but she is obviously not party to all relevant information at times, as it fails to cascade down to all departments quickly enough.
- The social worker that comes to our house has a great way of communicating with our daughter
- Very little. Some staff are helpful, others are shocking. No trust at all, they treat parents as if they know nothing.
- Respond to enquiries
- Communication
- To be able to refer via telephone rather than by lengthy forms.
- They act quickly when there is a safeguarding concerns.
- Some workers are great
- Most of the time providing a prompt reply. If they are unsure of the answer they will always get back to myself with the answer.
- The financial appointees are the only part of Focus that I can see is working well
- From my dealings with focus in the past I had no issues they're very helpful
- Adult Safeguarding, MCA and the training offer
- They are a service that is good at signposting families to lists of various agencies who can give actual support, but do not give support themselves.

Question 6. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about Focus?

Other Comments

- SPA are helpful
- Trying to get a yearly review is shocking
- Safeguarding is acted upon.
- It's frustrating as we work hard to pick up cases often urgently and within 24 hrs but because we are not a lead provider they get shipped off to somewhere else as soon as they have availability.

- In my experience it seems that first and foremost Focus look to protect their budget at all costs..... whatever provision follows is fixed by whatever the cheaper option is. Also -All carers should have the opportunity to be assigned to Focus workers who have the experience and "know-how" how to handle a situation- and not someone who is learning "on the hoof"
- A care package would have been great when we moved back into the area.
- It took three years to sort out funding for my son
- Sometimes making referrals on behalf of individuals who lack capacity can be difficult
- Communication is not great for many reasons
- Please invite day services to any reviews. Always send New Careplans when written so we can keep up to date.
- I wish that they would realise what a massive job parent carers do They do not actually realise it's 24/7
- I believe the service would benefit from stronger oversight and clearer accountability. People should feel safe, respected, and properly informed. My experience left me feeling the opposite

Demographics:

We asked for respondents to provide demographic data. Of the 50 people that responded 15 provided us with demographic data. We found that the most common age range of responses was 25-49 and mostly white British women completed the survey with three responses from men. No one had a long-term condition but two people classed themselves as disabled.



4. Conclusion

Focus Adult Social Care plays an important role in people's lives. Overall, service users value their homes, staff, and the support they receive, describing positive experiences such as feeling settled, enjoying activities, and appreciating financial guidance.

Focus responds quickly and effectively to safeguarding concerns, which is seen as a strength of the service. Feedback also suggests that the SPA team are helpful and that the training offer was "good" and "well delivered". Learning disability service users were happy with where they lived and the support provided.

However, communication is a significant challenge, both with service users and professionals involved in the care and support of people with a learning disability. Respondents shared concerns around delays in getting responses to emails and a lack of updates from staff.

Service users highlighted difficulties with frequent changes of workers, not always understanding meetings, and wanting more consistent visits.

Other issues fed back by professionals/ support providers were that Focus didn't fully consider the persons circle of support when completing reviews and decision making. Parents/carers advised of long waits for support to be put in place.

Healthwatch Recommendations:

Focus Adult Social Care CIC should;

- Review their staff guidance and policies around responding to service users/ callers in a timely manner
- Ensure that phone calls are responded to within 24 hrs. Even if this is not with a confirmed answer but to ensure that service users are reassured and do not feel forgotten

- Provide a regular worker for open long-term cases to ensure continuity of care and to reduce the times the service user must re tell their story.
- Ensure that open cases are provided with direct line telephone number into the team once allocated a worker.
- Consider the persons circle of support and ensure that the service user is given choice and options around meeting days, times and venue.

5. Provider Response

Focus extends its sincere thanks to North East Lincolnshire Healthwatch for its valuable work in gathering feedback and insights from our service users, carers, parents, family members, professionals, and support providers about the support we provide to people with a learning disability in North East Lincolnshire.

We were encouraged by the positive comments from the people we support and by the ways they told us the service is working well for them. At the same time, we recognise there is more to do. We will carefully review the themes raised and use them to guide improvements and strengthen our service.

As an organisation, we recognise that communication can sometimes be challenging, and that it is a theme raised in this feedback. We are already taking proactive steps to address this by developing a Communications Charter to help the people we support better understand the standards of service they can expect from us. We will work with our service users to ensure that our communication meets the needs of the community we serve.

We acknowledge that much of the feedback collected by Healthwatch was anonymous and, as a result, we cannot investigate individual matters without further information. We therefore encourage anyone who has expressed dissatisfaction with Focus to contact us directly via the Single Point of Access on 01472 256256 (Option 2) so that we can listen, understand and respond appropriately.

6. Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all organisations involved for distributing the survey and everyone who took part in the survey and provided us with information and feedback.

7. Further Reading

- [Learning Disability - Social Care Research and Stats | Mencap](#)
- [NHS England » Learning from lives and deaths – people with a learning disability and autistic people \(LeDeR\)](#)