



## **Adult Services**

# **Consultation Report for Service User Satisfaction 2011**

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**Final Consultation Report**  
**Service User Satisfaction within Adult Services 2011**

1. Introduction.....	3
2. Work Programme.....	4
3. Methodology.....	4
4. Response rates.....	8
5. Key Findings.....	8
<i>Assessment &amp; Referral</i>	
5.1 Information.....	8
5.2 Assessment & Referral .....	10
5.3 Complaints and Compliments.....	11
5.4 Your Views.....	12
<i>Services</i>	
5.5 Information.....	14
5.6 Services Received.....	15
5.7 Complaints and Compliments.....	18
5.8 Your Views.....	18
6. Conclusions.....	20
7. Recommendations.....	21
8. Appendices.....	23

## **1. Introduction**

The positive impact that service user and carer involvement in planning and delivery of services has been widely acknowledged. The Vale of Glamorgan Council Social Services Directorate is committed to consulting with its service users in order to identify areas of good practice and also where improvement and development may be required. As part of this commitment a two-year rolling programme for consultation into user satisfaction was implemented in April 2004. During the first year of the cycle, surveys were carried out with users of Children and Family Services and during the second year were completed within Adult Services. This cycle was repeated in 2007 and 2008/9, and again more recently in 2010 and 2011. The resulting overview for the 2011 consultation with service users and carers of Adult Services is presented below;

Adult Services aims to provide a service to those in the community and their carers who need support to live their lives as independently as possible. Social work teams carry out assessments and support the management of care within the Unified Assessment framework. Services are also provided within care packages so that service users can access support to participate in activities whilst enabling them to interact with others.

This report presents the key findings found during consultation with those receiving such support and services. As part of this, the methodology used and lessons learned are also discussed. **Full reports from consultation with each service user group are available on request.**

### **Planning Issues:**

1. Many of the service users have particular needs that had to be considered before they are contacted. Every attempt was made to gain their views, however there may still have been some who were not effectively engaged, for example those with a learning disability, or who have not been identified as a carer.
2. Due to the time constraints for the 2011 consultation, interviews were carried out with a limited number of service users. This may not have yielded as comprehensive a result as it potentially could have.
3. There have been some changes within the Day Service during 2011. One of the centres had closed and the service users were moved as a result to another centre. The responses for some of the service users in this area may therefore have been directly affected by this.

**2. Table 1: Work Programme for 2011**

2011/12	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb
Day Services														
VCRS														
Respite														
APS														
Residential Services														
Meals on Wheels														
Hospital Discharge Team														
Adult Community Care Team														
Community Support Team														
Occupational Therapy														
CMHTOP														
Vale Drug & Alcohol Team														
Mental Health Team														

### **3. Methodology**

Initial meetings took place with Team Managers prior to consulting with service users and carers for their service area. This was also a chance to discuss the most appropriate timing, methods and question areas for their specific service user groups. Where there were areas that the team managers felt would be useful to gather information about, for service development purposes for example, these were incorporated. Various options were explored to effectively capture viewpoints both quantitatively and qualitatively. The circumstances and abilities of the service users dictated the design of questionnaires, interviews and any focus groups. The views of informal/unpaid carers and relatives of service users were sought in most areas because service provision affects their lives significantly.

The methodology used for each service area is described below, along with an overview of the aspects of the service the consultation is exploring.

## **Social Work Teams**

- 3.1**
- a) Adult Services Community Care Team**
  - b) Hospital Discharge Social Work Team**
  - c) Community Mental Health Team for Older People**

Questionnaires were distributed for the above groups of service users and carers. UAP was used to obtain a list of service users who were currently on the caseload. If it was not advisable to contact some service users, this was clarified by the responsible Team Manager or Social Worker.

Unpaid carers were identified in each case, so that two questionnaires were sent where appropriate. For the Adult Services Community Care Team, the previous consultation was split into specialist areas (for the Physical Disabilities service users) so that views could be gained from service users with visual and hearing impairments. The aim was to ascertain service users and carer's perceptions of the information provision, level of support and ongoing communication from their social worker.

### **3.2 Occupational Therapy**

A list of service users was obtained from the Performance Management Team and checked by the Team Manager. This comprised those who had been referred and received assessments and minor adaptations in the past 6 months. Service users and carers were contacted using questionnaires only. They were asked about initial contact, information and assessment from the Occupational Therapy Team. In addition, questions were asked regarding the delivery and installation of their equipment and after care/follow up as part of the service received.

### **3.3 Adults with a Learning Disability (Adult Community Support Team)**

Various options were explored during this part of the consultation. Considering the needs of the client meant that viewpoints would be collated using various methods. Four methods were selected, with valuable input and assistance from other professionals who had experience of developing effective communication tools for those with a learning disability. These were:

- A questionnaire to unpaid carers/parents/relatives
- A symbolic questionnaire for people with learning disabilities to complete alone, with assistance, or during a structured interview (if required).
- A word version of the symbolic questionnaire for service users to complete.

A Vale PeopleFirst meeting was also held at the Hub at which the Policy and Quality Assurance Officer attended and observed. There was an opportunity here to speak to service users individually also if they were willing. Again, the aim was to ascertain service users and carer's perceptions of the information provision, level of support and ongoing communication from their social worker.

### **3.4 Vale Alcohol and Drug Team**

Before the questionnaire was reproduced, the Policy and Quality Assurance Officer discussed potential amendments with the Managers at Newlands. Questionnaires were distributed by staff at Newland to service users when they attended the clinic for their appointments. Individuals who attended were offered a questionnaire to complete and return either to the Policy and Quality Assurance Officer in an addressed envelope, or to Newland at the end of their session. This ensured confidentiality was maintained. The objective was to see how people felt about the accessing the service, the level of support and the difference it has made to their lives.

### **3.5 Community Mental Health Team (Community Support)**

Service users who had been allocated a support worker from the team were contacted regarding the support of their Community Support Worker. Questions were asked regarding the support, activities and opportunities offered by the service. A list of carers was also obtained, and questionnaires were sent separately to them.

## **Provider Services**

### **3.6 Vale Community Resource Service**

This service area has been adapted since 2009 to meet changing needs and requirements to modernise adult social care, and concentrate on rehabilitation. The new service aims to promote independence and reablement and has become integrated across health and social care.

All of those receiving the VCRS were consulted using questionnaires. One questionnaire was sent to both service users and unpaid relatives/carers. The service is provided on a short term basis, so questionnaires were sent to all current service users at one point in time to produce a 'snapshot' of the service for the summer of 2011. This was to ascertain whether they have become more independent as a result of the support from the service.

### **3.7 Residential Service**

Questionnaires were distributed to service users and carers for each Authority residential home. The report is separated by questioning area, and each home is considered separately within each area. An overview of the service was also provided so that good practice in all homes can be shared. The questionnaire included questions about the accommodation, activities available, staff, food and general support provided by the service.

### **3.8 Day Services**

Questionnaires were distributed to service users who attend the Vale of Glamorgan Council day centres. Interviews were also carried out at Woodlands and Rondel House with those who were willing, during the days on which they attended the day Centre. The carers' questionnaire was also sent to carers

where they had been identified. The questionnaire sought views about the activities, support, surroundings and food provided by the service.

### **3.9 Respite Service**

Questionnaires were used to consult with those who had been using the respite service. Parents/carers were also sent questionnaires also to elicit their views about the service provided to their relatives. The questionnaires for this service included questions about the accommodation, activities available, staff, food and general support provided by the service.

### **3.10 Adult Placement Service**

Questionnaires were sent both to service users who had been placed with host families and the hosts themselves. This was to find out about how effectively the Adult Placement Team was placing service users with appropriate placements in terms of support, activities etc. Questionnaires were also sent to the hosts to ascertain how effectively they are being supported (i.e. with training etc).

### **3.11 Meals on Wheels**

Continuing previous practice, questionnaires were used to contact service users where appropriate. These were updated to reflect any changes in the service since the previous exercise. The Policy and Quality Assurance Officer contacted the Service Manager to identify which service users would be able to respond via a questionnaire, and then contacted as many of these service users as possible. Questions were asked about the meals themselves, the arrangements surrounding delivery and staff that they had contact with.

### **3.12 Carers**

For each Adult Services consultation exercise, questionnaires have also been sent to any informal carers of the service user. Since 2009, a separate questionnaire has been distributed solely for the carers to respond to containing general questions about how Social Services (across Adult Services) were supporting carers, as well as how they were being supported by the particular team the service user was involved with. Carers' responses are provided in each section below where appropriate.

#### **4. Response rates (refer to appendix 1)**

Overall, response rates were below average (33%), perhaps reflecting some of the issues discussed in the introduction. However, response rates varied across the teams (as outlined in appendix 1). In some cases, the number of questionnaires sent out was not recorded; therefore the response rate could not be established.

#### **5. Key findings – Social Work Teams**

There were five key areas that the questionnaire and structured interviews explored. These were:

- **Information**
- **Referral and Assessment**
- **Complaints and Compliments**
- **Your Views**
- **Equal Opportunities Monitoring**

The following is an overview of the results under each of the above areas.

##### **5.1 Information**

###### **Service Users**

As found previously, most information was readily available, however, in some cases information had to be requested. Most respondents had received verbal information; however more written information (e.g. leaflets) was required in some areas. In other cases, information took too long to get to the service users, and in some cases, the service user had to contact their social worker to ask for it. Information was mostly relevant, accurate and clear. Some people did not feel that it was always very timely however.

Most people said they had received enough information at the start of the service, and where asked, most were quite satisfied overall with the information they received. Where information was required in an alternative format (e.g. large Print/non-English) nearly all received it.

Information booklets were found to be useful, however there was some specific information that some people would have liked more of. Examples are financial information such as benefits and entitlement. In addition the “workings of the team”, “names and contact numbers” for the person covering the relevant area and general information about the service and how it could specifically help the service user. Where service users had required specific advice however, most were satisfied with the ability to speak to someone on the telephone.

There were many comments about how helpful their social worker had been during their initial contact, especially where things are being explained to the Service user. One theme across all of the services was that the roles of both the social worker and the team needed to be clarified further. Similar information also



seems to be provided from different professionals which in some cases can be confusing.

### **Carers**

The carer's questionnaire asked about whether they and the service user received enough information about the various team at the start of the service. In most cases, carers agreed that they had. A few carers commented that information had taken a while to get to them, and others felt that they did not receive much, especially written information. Where required, most carers said they received information in the format of their choice, for example in larger print. Some of the comments that carers made about information was that they obtained it from varying sources, and on an ad hoc basis. They would like to know about the full range of services available to them rather than just some. In addition, some carers found they have had information as time has passed, rather than at the initial stages.

Most carers also felt that the Social Services Department in general has helped them to think through the options and choices available to them as a. Some did not agree with this however. Comments were provided describing how they have felt as though their choices as a carer are limited and that no-one has discussed options with them. Budgetary constraints were acknowledged by some carers as limiting the effective provision of services.

Many carers did provide positive comments about the information they have received about the teams.

**Table 2: Percentage of service users and carers:**

**a) Satisfied overall with the information provision from each service area**

**b) Felt that it was enough**

Service Area	Service Users		Carers	
	a	b	a	b
Hospital Discharge Planning	86	71	71	
Adult Services Community Care Team	100	62		83
Community Mental Health Team for Older People	75	33		71
OT		88		100
Community Support Team		85		76
Vale Community Resource Service		89		

Service Area	Service Users		Carers	
	a	b	a	b
Residential Service		82		90
Day Service	94	44	80	
Respite Service		93		89
Adult Placement Service		<b>Service users</b> 100 <b>Case Managers</b> 100	<b>Hosts</b>	<b>Hosts</b> 93
Meals on Wheels		86		
<b>Totals</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>86%</b>

## 5.2 Assessment & Referral

### Service Users

This section of the questionnaire referred to the assessment and the service itself, and explored care and contact with the teams. In nearly all cases, service users and carers were aware of who their social worker is and are aware of who they needed to contact if their needs changed. Most people were happy with the length of time they waited for their initial contact from the social worker. Most waited less than four weeks, although some appointments took over one month. A small number of service users and carers were dissatisfied, commenting that they had waited too long, and had not been updated with reasons for the delay. Where there was a waiting list for some services, again some people were unhappy with the time they had to wait in the initial stages.

Nearly all people confirmed that they had had an assessment and most people were happy with the assessment process. A few comments were provided about the lack of available resources and how this affected the support they receive. Most people had a copy of their care plan which they felt involved in developing, however some people were not aware of what their care plan is. Many service users felt that their care plan meets their needs, however there were some who would like additional social activities as part of their care plan. In addition, other service users felt that their plan does not cover all of their needs. Many service users confirmed that their care plan is reviewed however some were unsure about whether reviews took place.

When asked about their individual social worker/case manager, nearly all service users said they felt that they treated them with dignity and respect, were knowledgeable and that they listened to them. This was "sometimes" the case for a few people, and some comments were made about their social worker's availability.

Generally service users provided very positive comments about their social worker, for example describing them as “outstanding”, “very professional” and “supportive”.

Some service users made comments about the lack of communication from their social worker but many respondents felt that the referral and assessment process was quite straightforward.

### **Carers**

Nearly all of the carers felt that they and the service user were made to feel “welcome” when they were first involved with the social work team. In some areas, all of the carers agreed with this. A few however felt they were an additional burden on an already overstretched service. Most carers said the social worker/case manager provides the support and assistance appropriate for the service user’s needs. Most were also quite satisfied with the time it took for initial contact with the social worker, however some were not.

Some carers have received a Carer’s Assessment, but a considerable number have not. Many carers are also unsure about whether they have had one, and what it means. This finding was reflected in the outcomes for the carer questionnaire for Provider Services.

Specific questions were asked in the Carer’s Questionnaire regarding the support that Social Services provide specifically for them. Most felt that the department is considering their needs in the way that it supports the service user but others felt quite alone in their caring role. Most carers also felt that their views as a carer/relative have been taken into account during the service however a smaller proportion did not. Some carers felt that they are going along with what Social Services arranges and others felt they have had to arrange help themselves.

Many carers feel that Social Services has understood the impact that caring has on them, but some felt that unless someone is in the position all of the time, it is not possible to understand. Nearly all carers across the service felt that Social Services has helped them to make sure they have some free time and a break from caring each week, and again, many feel that the department has helped them to think through the options and choices available to them as a carer.

Despite this, some feel that the options and choices they have are limited. Time taken for arrangements to be made is too long in some cases.

Carers generally appreciated the support from the social worker however, and many gave very positive feedback about how much they value this.

## **5.3 Complaints and Compliments**

### **Service Users**

In most areas, only just over half of the service users said they were aware of the Council’s Complaints procedure, or that they had a right to complain or provide a compliment about the service they receive. In other areas more of the respondents were aware however overall, many people had not been given a copy of the procedure. A relatively small proportion of respondents have made

complaints and some had provided compliments. They were not asked to specify in the questionnaire, so this will be improved for the next consultation. In general, where people had made a complaint, most were happy with the way in which it had been dealt with. This is especially the case when issues are resolved effectively and efficiently. One person described how through discussion, a solution to their issue was obtained. Another respondent commented about having to wait in an office until an agreement had been reached which increased their distress, however many commented that they had no need to complain about the service they have received.

### **Carers**

Many carers said they were aware of the Council's Complaints policy, and their right to make a complaint or provide a compliment about the service, however many were not. Many also did not have copies of this information.

Where carers had made a complaint, most were happy with the way it was dealt with, but some felt their questions weren't answered.

Some carers have previously sent letters of thanks to the department, in appreciation of the support they have received from the teams.

## **5.4 Your Views**

### **Service Users**

In this section, service users and carers are asked to provide what they feel are the benefits of the service, and what they feel could be improved about it. Most respondents commented at this stage, with plenty of warm words and praise for the social work teams. One theme that consistently came across was service users' acknowledgement of the ongoing support they receive from social workers. Close, consistent and continuous contact from the various departments was appreciated by both service users and carers. Achieving independence was also a great benefit to many service users. Where some people have been in a particularly negative situation, Social Services has helped them to return to an improved way of life through its help and support. Individual members of staff have been praised and thanked, being described as "caring", "professional" and "kind". Service users in some instances have said that they are happy with the help they are getting, and spoke to their social worker about a wide range of things. Other service users described how their social worker listened to them and felt that they could easily speak to them if they needed to. It was helpful for them to know they have support and patience when needed.

People appreciate the flexibility of teams to respond to queries and offer advice when necessary. Prompt response to phone calls and queries was recognised and viewed positively. In addition, in some cases when an immediate response is not possible, the case manager/social worker will find out and respond as soon as possible. Many people were generally pleased with their case manager/social worker's ability to solve problems and find that they provide constructive advice.

Despite being asked to suggest areas where the service can be improved, many respondents said that they could think of none, which is very encouraging.

Some respondents mentioned that waiting times could be an issue in certain services, and there were some comments about the time it takes for packages to be put into place.

One area of improvement that has been suggested is that some people would like to have a single point of contact in Social Services to act as a coordinator for service users and families and assist with any issues. Having clearer advice about what services are available was suggested, as was understanding what was available to them. Communication between agencies and professionals could be improved in some cases. This is especially when receiving support from more than one team. Similarly it was suggested that ongoing communication from the case manager/social worker would improve the support they receive and ensure that their care plan is up to date. It would also ensure that they are kept aware of aspects such as training instead of hearing about it on an ad hoc basis. It was also suggested that more services such as leisure centres and respite centres should be available for service users. Despite this, the limited resources available to the teams were mentioned in connection with the negative aspects of their support, but it was also acknowledged that work is carried out to the best of their ability with the resources available to them.

### **Carers**

Carers appreciated being kept informed regularly about the service user's and their own support. The fact that the case manager/social worker tends to be more objective is also seen as a positive for carers, as judgement is less "clouded" but they remain empathetic. Some carers were pleased with the level of support and coordination of the care package that the teams provided. In general, carers were pleased that support is available, and that social workers can help if problems arise.

Some carers felt reassured that the standards are being monitored and that if necessary, there is someone who will advocate for the service user and themselves when necessary.

When asked what could be improved, some carers felt they and the service users did not receive enough support at all. Others carers said that the support was there in an emergency but not on a day to day basis. Visits are not regular enough for some carers, and they feel that a lack in communication (and therefore up to date information) will result. Others felt that they did not receive enough information about other support available in the community, and others felt that the volume of paperwork is too high, especially financial assessments. One improvement was for there to be a quicker assessment process from initial referral to assessment and a care plan being developed. Other carers suggested that more social workers are needed to cope with current workloads.

## **Teams Providing Services**

The question/discussion about services provided comprised four main areas, which were:

- **Information**
- **Referral and Assessment/Services Received**
- **Complaints and Compliments/Your Views**
- **Equal Opportunities Monitoring**

The resulting overview is presented below with reference to the above areas:

### **5.5 Information Received**

#### **Service Users**

Nearly all respondents said that they had had enough information, and were happy with the amount that was provided to them before they initially received a service. In many cases, people felt that they were able to make an informed decision about the service based on the information that they had received. Where people had had a chance to visit the service, or where they were going to be living, they were nearly always pleased as a result. Even in some cases where the admission to residential care was arranged very quickly, respondents still felt informed and welcome at the start of their service. In other cases, other family members had arranged the service, so service users sometimes did not have as much information and were not so aware of the arrangements. In such cases, most were still happy with information they had been given. Other service users had received information through word of mouth, where friends or relatives had already had experience of the service. They found this useful.

Most people had received verbal information, and were pleased with the format in which they had received the information. Where required, nearly all respondents said that they had received the information they required in a format suitable for them (e.g. Braille, or larger print). Quite a number of respondents however said they did not receive a handbook in the services where this was available. Many respondents could not recall whether they had received a handbook or not. Where people felt they had not received enough information, in many cases they would have liked more information about all of the services available to them. Some people found this confusing. More specific information about charging was also requested. Further clarification of staff member's roles was suggested for some services.

Information has been found to be comprehensive in most cases and where it was provided verbally, the service had been fully explained to service users. Many people also appreciate the opportunity to be able to speak to staff and obtain information on an ongoing basis.

## **Carers**

Many carers said they received enough information before the service user started the service, although some did comment that they could have had more. Other carers would have liked more written information.

Some carers suggested providing more up to date information, and more specific information about the type of provider services that are offered by the authority, for example, the different types of residential home, and who they catered for.

Most carers also felt that the information they received was sufficient to enable them to make a decision where necessary, about their relative's care. Some did not, and felt that they had to obtain information on their own initiative.

In some cases, carers felt that staff are very knowledgeable, and they appreciated the opportunity to ask staff questions. In addition, they felt reassured that if they could not answer the query, they would come back to them as soon as possible.

Where visits had taken place, carers said that service users looked forward to starting the service. Many of the comments provided by carers about information were positive, and as a result, they felt reassured about their relative starting the service.

## **5.6 Services received**

### **Service Users**

Although many respondents confirmed they had a copy of their service delivery plan (where applicable), some people said they did not.

Nearly all who responded said that they felt welcome when they first started attending the service. This response was reflected throughout Provider Services, with many service users providing positive comments, highlighting how welcome they felt. Hosts for Adult Placement feel that the matching of service user/host family was done effectively. Service users also felt welcomed and at home where they lived.

In areas such as Vale Community Resource Service and Meals on Wheels, service users feel that they are being effectively supported to maintain, or recover their independence. Staff are reliable on the whole, despite there having been a few delays in the past. Tasks are being carried out as planned, and service users feel they are being treated with dignity and respect. No one felt the service was below satisfactory in this area. Some people felt that they are not informed if times are sometimes altered but mostly understood that delays were possible due to previous calls taking longer than anticipated. Most people felt that the care or meals provided were suitable for their needs and that the service coped well to provide support to service users within a limited time period.

Many people across Provider services were happy with the service plans they had, and confirmed that they are reviewed regularly. In some cases, people were unsure what their service plan was.

Service users were asked to rate various aspects of other services. This included activities that are available at residential homes, respite and day centres. There was a mixed response to this.

Many people seem to get involved in leisure activities and enjoyed organised entertainment such as quizzes or bingo. In some day services, popular activities

were creative ones such as crafts, woodwork (where applicable) and art. Many of the service users also said they enjoyed taking part in organised visits, for example to the cinema or bowling. Therapeutic activities were also popular. Service users of the Adult Placement Service were satisfied with the activities they took part in, with most people enjoying the social activities. Most people across Provider Services were satisfied with the activities available, and felt they suited their needs however sometimes, due to staffing levels, activities could be limited. Many service users across Respite, Residential and Day Services however felt that there should be more activities available, particularly social ones. Another suggestion was to have more computer and internet access. For Day, Residential and Respite services, service users were asked to rate various aspects of the service (food, accommodation, living arrangements and staff). Very few people were dissatisfied with choice and quality of food, and most were satisfied with the times of meals and the length of time given to eat their food. There was only a small number dissatisfied with cleanliness and tidiness of the premises across provider services however there were some who were "quite" satisfied. Despite this, some other people were not so satisfied with the furnishings in some buildings. Nearly all people were pleased with the arrangements in the Residential and Respite Service for cleaning their rooms, provision for privacy and how comfortable their rooms are. Most respondents were pleased with their living arrangements overall in Provider Services. There was very positive feedback regarding the staff across provider services. For services provided at people's homes, service users seemed to be pleased with the members of staff they had contact with, and provided compliments for the staff. People were generally pleased with the attitudes and manner of Residential, Respite and Day centre staff, and also how they communicated with the service users. Some dissatisfaction was conveyed regarding the availability of staff to assist them however it was acknowledged that this was often because they were understaffed. Some people did not feel that their views have been considered when changes have taken place (to activities for example). A small number of service users expressed dissatisfaction with the transport available. All but one person felt the transport was reliable and comfortable, and all were satisfied with the accessibility of the transport for Day Services. For Adult Placement, there was no dissatisfaction expressed by service users regarding what their host families supported them with. Only two respondents expressed any dissatisfaction with the support they receive for teaching life skills. Service users were very appreciative of the support they received for daily living and their surroundings. Views about the hosts were also very positive. Hosts themselves feel supported by the Adult Placement Service, confirmed that their placement is reviewed regularly and that they are kept informed about any relevant changes in the service. Case managers felt they are involved and consulted throughout by the service and most feel satisfied with the support that the service users receive. Most service users across Provider Services feel that the service they receive is appropriate for their needs. Despite some service users feeling restricted at times, staff are highly regarded and provide good levels of support and



assistance to them. Most people also feel that they are involved in decisions made about their care and changes to their circumstances are appropriately catered for.

### **Carers**

Nearly all carers across Provider Services said that the service user was made to feel welcome when they first started using the service. Many commented very positively about the staff, describing them as warm and friendly. When asked to comment about what they think about the activities, carers for Day service users provided very positive feedback, describing the variety of activities available, particularly creative activities. Some carers for Day Service users confirmed that the service user has a service delivery plan that is reviewed regularly however a larger number of carers were unaware of this.

For Residential Services nearly all carers felt that the service user's needs have been appropriately catered for. Some did feel that there were issues with lack of stimulation in one of the homes but positive comments were made overall. They also feel that the home nearly always enables the service user to access opportunities as identified in their care plan. Moreover staff are treating the service users with courtesy and respect across the service in most cases, but a few carers said they felt otherwise at times. This related to time staff spent with their relative and issues such as being given fluids at appropriate times.

Although many carers across the service felt that Social Services is taking their own needs into account in the way it supports the service user, some did not. In some cases this was because they feel they do not receive enough respite. A slightly higher number of carers felt that their views as a carer/relative have been taken into account during the service, but some did not. Lack of contact with Social Services was mentioned, and also, the disappointment felt about the closure of one of the residential homes was highlighted by some carers. Most carers felt their views as a carer/relative have been taken into account across Provider Services. Many also feel that the Social Services Department has helped them to make sure they have some free time/a break from caring each week although some do not. Around half of the carers who responded felt that Social Services has helped them to think through the options and choices available to them as a carer. Some carers commented that options are limited and another commented that no-one had explained any options to them. Some carers felt that the department in general has understood the impact that caring has on them, however it was suggested that no-one could really understand this unless they were in that position. Others mentioned that no-one understands the impact that caring has, despite Social Services doing its best.

Across Provider Services, most carers felt that the service user receives the appropriate care for their needs, however where this has not been the case, often staffing levels and transport issues were given as the reasons. Carers also felt that in Day Services, service users receive the support and assistance appropriate for the service user's needs, and to maintain their independence. In

addition, they feel the support from the day service meets theirs and the service user's expectations.

Most carers feel they are kept fully informed about any issues relating to the care provided by Residential Services; however some carers feel they are not aware of day to day routines, and another comment related to the lack of communication when their relatives were ill.

Carers are pleased with the care their relative receives, and have plenty of compliments about the staff across the service. Families are very reassured that their relatives are provided with a quality service across Provider Services.

## **5.7 Complaints and Compliments**

### **Service Users**

In this section, service users were asked about making a complaint about any aspect of their involvement and service. Quite a large number of respondents said they were not aware of Social Services' Complaints Procedure and Guidance. All service users and carers should receive a copy of this. In some service areas, most people have received one, but in others, many did not. Only around half of the respondents had received this information in some areas. Some service users had previously made a complaint about the service they have received. In most of the cases, people were happy with how their complaint was dealt with. Most complaints had been dealt with sympathetically and efficiently. In a smaller number of cases however, issues had still not been resolved satisfactorily.

Many people had also provided a compliment about the service they had received. Some of these people had written thank-you letters, or personally thanked staff for their hard work.

### **Carers**

In most areas of Provider Services, approximately half of the carers were aware of the Council's Complaints Procedure and Guidance. In some cases, under half of the respondents had a copy of it. Where carers had previously made a complaint, they felt that it had been dealt with professionally and to their satisfaction. A few complaints were ongoing. Many carers had provided a compliment about the service their relative receives, and reiterated that the staff were courteous, caring and considerate each time they had had contact with them.

## **5.8 Your Views**

### **Service Users**

Service users were asked to comment about what they felt were the benefits of the service they receive, and what they feel could be improved.

In some areas, service users appreciate the independence the service it provides, and the chance to do new activities. In Respite and Adult Placement, the service user could enjoy the benefits of living in the community in a family environment without feeling they are confined. Another benefit that was frequently mentioned was the ability to socialise with others using the service.

Some service users enjoyed using some of the services because they are small and friendly, like a second home.

For services that are provided at home, the fact that someone was coming to assist the service user was very reassuring, and they were grateful that someone was coming on a regular basis. This ensured that they maintained some of their independence while remaining in their own home. This and the convenience it provides are consistently mentioned.

Many of the Day Service and Residential service users appreciate the opportunity to go on day trips and enjoy doing something different from the usual routine. Others appreciate the daily structure that the service provides. Many of the service users also mention how the service has increased their confidence. When asked what could be improved about the support they receive, many actually said that nothing needed to improve, and took the opportunity to reiterate that everything was satisfactory for them. Some would suggest decreasing the amount of paperwork in some services, and in some cases, the processes to get the service started take too long. Those who attended some of the day centres and residential homes also suggested some improvements to the buildings were a good idea. Another suggestion was made to have more choice of food available, especially for those with specific dietary requirements. Having a panel of service users was suggested. This panel could represent any issues that came up on behalf of service users.

### **Carers**

Many carers in Day Services mentioned the opportunity for the service user to have a day away from home and meet other people. In addition carers appreciate the time they have for themselves when the service user is attending. Most carers appeared to be satisfied that the food available was of good quality, and that the service users' health and dietary requirements are adequately addressed.

It is reassuring for carers to know that the service user is safe while being away from their home, and where this is overnight, that someone is there to reassure the service user if necessary. As the service often caters for people of similar age and circumstances, service users have found things in common. Similarly carers appreciated regular communication with staff and being consulted about the service user's needs and welfare. Many relatives were very pleased with the support from the staff in most areas of Provider Services, and they appear to be highly regarded.

Very few carers commented about what could be improved about the service. Some felt that "nothing" could be improved. Some carers were unhappy that one of the homes was due to close. Others commented that transport could be an issue as sometimes the vehicles could be unreliable. More day trips out were suggested but it was acknowledged that this was not always possible. Another aspect mentioned was the toilet facilities. A few carers mentioned the lack of privacy. On a general basis, some carers were dissatisfied with the amount of respite they had but on the whole carers appeared to be pleased with the support.

## **6. Conclusions**

Overall, results have been very positive and encouraging. On the whole, service users and carers are pleased with the support they receive and the services provided. Views about information provision were quite positive, but improvements still need to be made in some areas, for example where delays occur, and the need to provide more information about all the support available. Written information was greatly appreciated as was consistent contact with Social Services. Where visits took place to Provider services, views were nearly always positive. There were no significant issues with initial meetings with representatives from Social Services but some people were unclear about the roles of staff, and also about care plans and what they meant. In addition, there have been some delays in the assessment and referral process however respondents noted the lack of resources available and the resulting effects on staffing levels.

Carer's assessments need to be offered more consistently as many carers had not received one. Carers feel supported in many ways, however some do not, and feel that they need more. Many feel the department understands their situation but others feel that their options are limited.

There was a general lack of awareness of the Complaints and Compliments Policy, and many people did not have copies. Despite some complaints being made, many did provide compliments about the service. There was much praise for staff across the service, and service users and carers appreciated the consistent communication and contact when it was evident.

### **Process issues**

Attempts were made to consider service user's needs before consultation took place, but issues arose from the shorter consultation timescale in 2011.

Future consultation will consider ways to improve response rates and increase engagement. It seems that structured interviews were effective in all areas for gaining in-depth and personal views. It would therefore be beneficial to try and increase the number carried out in future consultation exercises.

In areas such as the Vale Drug & Alcohol Team, the response rate was high, possibly because the service users could complete and return the questionnaires while attending for their visit. Response rates were higher in other areas, especially where it was possible to arrange a focus group and where interviews were carried out. This needs to be extended to other service areas.

## **7. Recommendations**

- I. Further clarification of certain documents and areas of the service to be given so that service users/carers respond to the questionnaires with reference to appropriate areas (e.g. care plans, responsibilities of social workers etc).
- II. Potential delays in referral and assessment to be communicated (where possible) to colleagues, service users and carers. This could be added into information leaflets so that service users know what to expect from each service.
- III. Interviews to be carried out for each consultation exercise (where appropriate). This was not possible for the present consultation due to availability and time constraints but should be planned into future exercises.
- IV. Continue developing issues logs after each consultation, outlining both positive and negative outcomes of the consultation exercises that team managers will provide responses to.
- V. Continue to follow up issues logs that have not been returned.
- VI. The questions regarding information provision should be clarified so that they ask both about satisfaction and whether the information was sufficient.
- VII. Carers should be also be asked in their questionnaire whether they had been *offered* a carers assessment in the first place rather than just 'received' one.
- VIII. Ensure the responses to the issues logs are used to demonstrate outcomes from the consultation and are used in feedback to participants.
- IX. The findings and resulting issues logs will provide a benchmark against which service satisfaction will be measured in future. More encouragement is necessary for these to be completed.
- X. Methods of consultation will be further developed to gather the views of unpaid carers and relatives.
- XI. Further attempts will be made to work with other organisations to engage hard to reach groups.
- XII. Methods for consulting directly with clients with a learning disability are further explored and developed between the Policy and Quality Assurance Officer and the Learning Disability Team.

- XIII. Information provision will be reviewed in each service area, continue to develop and improve both at initial contact and throughout the service that is received in the community. In addition, specific consultation will be carried out with service users regarding the initial provision of information from Contact OneVale and signposting across Social Services as a whole.
- XIV. Ensure consistent provision of complaints information (Policy, process and feedback).
- XV. Further training to be provided to staff regarding the complaints procedure. This should include providing service users and carers with written information regarding complaints and compliments at the start of the service.
- XVI. The Directorate should continue to promote Carers Assessments to underline their importance and the legal entitlement for carers to receive an assessment of their own needs.
- XVII. The Carers Assessments training programmes for staff will be reviewed to ensure they provide staff with the necessary skills and local knowledge to support carers.
- XVIII. More strategic planning should help to ensure that social workers have more time to respond effectively to service users in their caseload.

## **8. Appendices**

1. Response rates
2. Consultation Questionnaire Responses:

### **Providers**

1. Adult Placement Service
2. Day Services
3. Home Care
4. Meals on Wheels
5. Respite
6. Vale Intermediary Care Service

### **Social Work Teams**

7. Community Mental Health Team for Older People
8. Hospital Social Work
9. Learning Disabilities/Adult Community Support Team
10. Occupational Therapy
11. Adult Services Community Care Team
12. Substance Misuse/Vale Alcohol and Drug Team

### Appendix 1 – Response Rates

Service/Team	Distributed/ Contacted		Response		Overall Percentage response
	Service Users	Carers	Service Users	Carers	Service users and carers
Adult Community Care Team	72	72	17	13	21%
Adult Placement Services	Not known	Not known	15 service users 15 hosts		
Meals on Wheels	170		72		42%
Respite	Not known	Not known	15	18	
Hospital Discharge Social Work Team	44	44	7	7	16%
Day Services	69 service users 56 carers		35	9	35%
Residential Services <i>Bryneithin</i> <i>Southway</i> <i>Porthceri</i> <i>Ty Dewi Sant</i> <i>Ty Dyfan</i>	Not known	Not known	0 13 20 24 13 <b>70</b>	4 12 7 22 7 <b>52</b>	
Substance Misuse	30		21		70%
Occupational Therapy	100		25	11	36%
Community Support Team	147		63	28	62%
Mental Health Team (CSW)	29				
Community Support Team for Older Persons	34	34	10	7	25%

Total contacted (where known)	Total literal response	Total percentage response
2005/6 - 1764	610 (103 carers)	34.5% (17% carers)
2008/9 – 1698	660	39%
2011/12 – 901	295	36%