

Let's make support work for everyone

28th June 2016



Healthwatch Sutton
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Background



This report is all about support for people with a learning disability.



A meeting was held on 28th June 2016 to find out what people think about support work.



Support work is done by people who are paid to spend time with someone and help them to do the things the supported person wants to do.

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People came to the meeting.



We had people with a learning disability who use support work at the meeting.



We had parents and carers at the meeting.



We had support workers at the meeting.

The people who organised the meeting



The meeting was organised by Healthwatch Sutton, with the help of Speak Up Sutton and Sutton Mencap.



Healthwatch Sutton is local charity that listens to people about their experience of health and social care. We use people's feedback to make recommendations to improve local services.

Telephone: 020 8641 9540

E-mail: info@healthwatchsutton.org.uk

Website: <http://www.healthwatchsutton.org.uk/>



Speak Up Sutton is a self-advocacy group for adults with learning disabilities.

Telephone: 020 8669 0500.

E-mail: speakupsutton@advocacyforall.org.uk

Website:

www.advocacyforall.org.uk/self.php#sutton-su



Sutton Mencap is a local charity which provides play, leisure and learning opportunities for people with a learning disability.

Telephone: 020 8647 8600

e-mail: info@suttonmencap.org.uk

Website: www.suttonmencap.org.uk

What happened at the meeting?



At the start of the meeting, Speak Up Sutton showed a film they had made about support work.



Speak Up Sutton had visited some services which people with a learning disability go to with their support workers.



The film showed people from Speak Up Sutton talking about poor care and support that they had seen.



They talked about people being ignored by their paid carers.



They talked about paid carers who were on their phones and not talking to the people they care for.



They talked about paid carers who didn't take part in activities and didn't help.



After the film, people went into smaller groups to talk about support work.



There were groups for people with a learning disability.



There was a group for parents and carers.



There was a group for support workers.

What did people who use support say?



Most people at the meeting who use support said that their support workers are good.



Most people said their support worker helps them choose things for themselves.



Most people said they choose where they go out. Sometimes their support worker helps them choose.



Most people said their support worker helps them join in activities.



Most people said their support worker helps them at home.



Some people said they were not always allowed to do things they wanted to do.



Some people said they do not go out as much as they like.



Some people said they could not stay out as late as they like.



Some people said that their support worker is not always able to help them or is sometimes too busy to help them.

What do people want from their support worker?



People who used support were asked what their perfect day would look like.



Everyone gave lots of examples of different things they would like to do.



People said how they would like their support worker to help them.



They said they would like to be treated with respect.



They said they would like to talk to each other like friends.



They said they would like their support worker to do activities with them.



They said they would like their support worker to help them to sort out problems.



They said their support worker should be caring and patient.



They said they would like help with practical tasks and with looking after money.



They said their support worker should help them to stay out as late as they wanted to.

What did parents and family carers say?



Most parents and carers said that they were happy with the support workers for their family members.



They also said they sometimes saw poor quality support provided to other people.



They sometimes saw support workers who ignored the person that they were being paid to support.



They felt that support workers were very important for making sure people have a good quality of life.



They thought it was very important that support workers got to know and understand the person they support.



They thought a support worker should act like a friend who goes to places with the person they support and talks to them throughout the day.



They thought support workers should help people develop to the best of their ability.



They thought that support workers should offer more interesting and varied activities.



They thought it was important that the support worker talked to parents about what had happened during the day.



They thought there should be a 'This is me' document, with space for support workers to give information to parents.

What else did parents and family carers say?



Parents and carers felt there are not enough good support workers for everyone who needs them.



They thought that support workers need life experiences and wisdom.



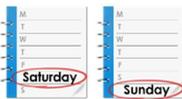
They thought there should be more training for support workers.



They were concerned that support workers are not paid enough.



They felt that a lack of transport can make it difficult to provide support work.



They felt it was hard to find support at weekends.



They felt that parents have to do a lot of work to make sure the quality of support was good enough.



They were worried about what would happen if they were no longer able to organise support for their family member.

What did support workers say?



The support workers at the meeting talked about how they do their jobs.



The support workers talked about what they did during the day.



They said that the activities they did, and the places they visited, were decided by the people they support.



They talked about how important it was to learn about and get to know the person they support.



They talked about their own learning and research they had carried out to be able to provide better support.



They sometimes looked things up on the internet, or talked to other support workers to find out about places to visit and activities people might be interested in.



Some support workers said there was not enough money to do the activities they wanted to do.



Some support workers said it was not clear who should pay for their transport costs or entrance fees. They sometimes paid for these out of their own money.



Some support workers talked about difficulties using public transport, especially when a person is using a wheelchair.

What did support workers think about their jobs?



The support workers said that they really enjoy their jobs and are very happy to think that they were helping people.



They said support work is a vocation. A vocation is a job that someone really wants to do well and really likes doing.



They said that support workers should be properly trained, but some were confused about which courses support workers should do.



They felt that support workers do not get paid very much.



They said that support workers should be able to get support from their managers.



They thought it would be useful to set up a network of support workers.

How did support workers think their work could be improved?



They said that we need more publicity about the good work done by support workers.



They recognised that some people receive poor quality support.



They had all seen news stories about people receiving poor quality care and being abused by care workers. They are all very angry about this.



They said that some people who were employed as support workers do not have a caring attitude and should not be doing the job.



They said that employers should be much more careful about who they recruit and how they support and manage them.



They said that the status of support work should be raised. This means that everyone needs to understand that support work is a very important job.

The main points from the meeting



The people at the meeting who use support work and the parents and carers are generally happy with their support workers.



The support workers at the meeting gave some great examples of how good quality support work can be delivered.



But people at the meeting have seen poor quality support provided to other people.



Everyone agreed that people who needs it should get good quality support.



Everyone agreed that it is time to make support work for everyone.

Healthwatch recommendations for the London Borough of Sutton



On behalf of people with a learning disability, Healthwatch Sutton is making a number of recommendations.



These are Healthwatch Sutton's key priorities for the London Borough of Sutton



Council contracts must recognise the importance of a skilled, appropriately paid workforce to provide support work.



The council must have a robust system for monitoring the quality of support work and acting promptly on concerns.



People who use support and parents and carers must be involved in monitoring the quality of support.



Where poor quality support has been identified, an action plan must be put in place and regularly monitored.

Healthwatch recommendations for service providers and support workers



On behalf of people with a learning disability, Healthwatch Sutton is making a number of recommendations.



These are Healthwatch Sutton's key priorities for service providers and support workers.



Employers of support workers should introduce systems to ensure only appropriate people are employed.



Employers of support workers should monitor the quality of support provided by their employees.



Employers of support workers should be clear about how payment for activities, entrance fees and fares should be met.



Support workers should be able to give their views on the quality of support they see being provided by other support workers.



Support workers should develop contacts with each other, across organisations, to enable them to provide better support for service users.

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