

Are local home care services effectively supporting older people to eat and drink?

Tell us your story.

This week Healthwatch Nottingham and Nottinghamshire – the Health and Social Care watchdog – are launching a new survey on home care and are inviting people aged over 75 and their carers to urgently respond to tell us whether they and/or their loved ones food and drink needs at home are being met by Local Authority Funded Home Care.

Over 4300 people over the age 75 years in our area are in receipt of home care which is funded by Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County Council through contracts with private providers which they commission and pay for.

According to Age UK one in ten people over the age of 65 years are malnourished or at risk of malnutrition, that's over one million older people in the UK.

Research also shows that older people are more susceptible to dehydration which can lead to further complications such as fatigue, confusion, constipation, loss of balance and increased risk of hospital admissions.

Healthwatch Nottingham and Nottinghamshire CEO Jane Laughton said, *'It is critical that we find out whether peoples' basic needs such as food and drink are being met through care companies funded by our Local Authorities. We encourage anyone over the age of 75 years who is receipt of home care, or their carers, family or friends to get in touch with us to tell us about their experience'*.

One informal carer from the Mansfield told us, *'I asked the carers to weigh Mum's dinner before and after eating because I was worried she was losing weight. It turned out she was only eating a couple of ounces/ a few grams a day. The house however was always obsessively clean because the carers were spending their time cleaning rather than encouraging Mum to eat. You wouldn't put a plate of food in front of a toddler and expect them to eat it all up alone'*.

Melanie Brooks, Corporate Director of Adults Social Care and Health for Nottinghamshire County Council said, *'Hearing from people on their experiences of receiving care and support in their own home is really important to us so we understand how we develop and grow services. Healthwatch are trusted partners who can listen to stories with an open mind and present feedback from people in an honest way'*.

'I would encourage people to take part in the Healthwatch survey on care at home. It will help us develop and improve home care services which we know are so vital to people who use them'. Catherine Underwood, Corporate Director for People Nottingham City Council

If you would like to take part in our telephone survey you will be entered into a draw with a prize of a £50 voucher of your choice.

Please call Healthwatch Nottingham and Nottinghamshire on 07832 283196 and leave a message if you, your friend or relative would like to take part. The results of this survey will help us to make recommendations to our Local Authorities about how Home Care for older people can be improved.

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